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'NIXON IN CHINA': PART 2

ACT I: A Banqueting Hall in Beijing: Smarting from the cruel portrayal of himself in ABC's docudrama *The Final Days*, RICHARD NIXON arrives and toasts his hosts by singing "Still Crazy After All These Years." LI PENG and DENG XIAOPING sing traditional Chinese anthems of greeting; Li vows earnestly to stamp out corruption and inflation in his recitative, "Follow the Capitalist Road." In a nearby tavern, reporter NICHOLAS KRISTOF and THE NEW YORK TIMES CHORUS sing the rousing drinking song, "It's Business as Usual in Beijing."

ACT II: A Country Club Just Outside Shanghai: AL HAIG and HENRY KISSINGER have just arrived; the President's brother, PRESCOTT BUSH, offers a song of welcome, "There's No Ventures Like Joint Ventures." Al and Henry stroll admiringly around the golf course that Prescott has built; they join in on the choruses of Nixon and Deng's duet, "We'll Get By With a Little Blood Between Friends."

ACT III: Tiananmen Square: In the background a ghostly chorus of STUDENTS and YOUNG WORKERS sing the universal dirge, "Don't Forget to Remember." Nixon pretends not to hear. From the windows of the U.S. Embassy, the voice of FANG LIZHI is heard, singing "Stand By Me." A few AMERICAN TOURISTS timidly take snapshots of the Gate of Heavenly Peace; a KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN VENDOR dispenses Hot & Spicy Drumettes to a crowd of SOLDIERS, who hum "The Colonel Sanders March." Nixon's motorcade departs, showered with lotus petals by young DANCERS from the Beijing Opera. Later, at the airport: Nixon stands atop the aircraft steps, arms outstretched; Deng Xiaoping bids farewell with the aria, "When Your Arteries Harden/Don't Worry, Old Friend." Nixon replies with his closing aria, "The Show Must Go On."

PLUTONIUM CON
Karl Grossman
Judith Long

RETURN TO
WARD HOLLER
Andy Yale

CRACK
AFTERMATH
Jefferson Morley

DRUGS, CRIME
& THE MEDIA
Ishmael Reed

REVOLUTION
& NOSTALGIA
Daniel Singer

OUR 'TIMES'MAN
IN THE
MIDDLE EAST
Micah L. Sifry

HUD/E.P.A. SLUSH FUNDS

THE WHITE HOUSE CONNECTION

MURRAY WAAS

On September 17, 1982, President Ronald Reagan made a campaign appearance in Flemington, New Jersey, on behalf of Republican Congresswoman Millicent Fenwick, who was locked in a close race for a U.S. Senate seat. Appearing at the San Gennaro festival in Flemington, Reagan interrupted his prepared remarks to tell the crowd he had "an announcement that will surprise all of you. In spite of all our cutting back, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has agreed to supply public funds for 125 units of elderly housing at Park Place in Ewing, New Jersey!" Then, turning toward Fenwick, Reagan joked, "If you don't elect her as Senator we'll take it away."

Six days later, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Anne Burford and New Jersey Republican Governor Thomas Kean jointly announced that the E.P.A. had awarded six grants to clean up hazardous waste sites in New Jersey.

The timing of these announcements was not a coincidence, of course; nor did they have anything to do with legitimate policy objectives. They were examples, rather, of how the Reagan Administration used E.P.A. and HUD grants as a political slush fund. Despite the recent housing scandal and an earlier one involving the E.P.A., this manipulation of public money for political ends remains a largely untold story.

In 1983 Rita Lavelle, an assistant administrator of the E.P.A. in charge of the agency's \$1.6 billion Superfund program, was

(Continued on Page 600)

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EXCHANGE.

BALANCING ACCOUNTS

New York City

It is not often that a book is reviewed with the intelligence, expertise and sympathy that Robert Pollin has accorded to our *The Debt and the Deficit* ["The Keynes Mutiny," Sept. 25]. We may seem churlish, therefore, if we take some exception to his careful analysis.

He asks, "Why aren't the large deficits, regardless of what they are financing, stimulating growth?" His answer lies in changes in the structure of the economy, especially in adverse movements in income distribution and increasing vulnerability to foreign competition. But these tendencies affect the consequences of *all* spending and borrowing, private as well as public. Hence, they cannot be put forward as the reason that deficits, as such, have lost their stimulative power.

There are two other answers to Pollin's question. One of them is that deficits haven't sufficiently stimulated the system because they have been too small. In the mid-1930s, deficits ranged from 3 to 6 percent of the gross national product. In today's economy, deficits of that proportionate size would come to \$150 billion-\$300 billion. That would exert a real push, despite the structural obstacles to which Pollin calls our attention.

Second, government spending has not been targeted for growth. If we had used our Pentagon dollars for education, public infrastructure and research and development, we believe that the stimulus to the economy would have been considerably larger than it has been. We agree with distinguished economists like Franco Modigliani and Benjamin Friedman that the deficit would be a lot easier to live with if more of it had been accounted for by this type of spending.

Pollin cites these arguments in his review. Somehow, however, they are forgotten in his overall critique. In fact, we would argue that they are an important part of his claim that there are serious stagnationist tendencies in the American economy today. Indeed, the book provides evidence that we share Pollin's concerns. We point out the degree to which the persistence of large deficits was a totally unplanned consequence of the agonizing inflation of 1980-81 and of the deep recession of 1982. Later on, we suggest that the budget deficit, instead of being the cause of the trade deficit, may in fact have been a consequence of the forces that produced such a huge excess of merchandise imports.

We still believe that deficits, especially deficits incurred for the accumulation of public sector capital, offer us the best way of coping with stagnationist tendencies in the short run.

Robert Heilbroner
Peter Bernstein

POLLIN REPLIES

Riverside, Calif.

I could agree entirely with Robert Heilbroner and Peter Bernstein's concluding paragraph if we could italicize its last phrase. It would then read, "Deficits, especially deficits incurred for the accumulation of public sector capital, offer us the best way of coping with stagnationist tendencies *in the short run*." Stated as such, this paragraph incorporates several important observations, which I believe clarify the central issues in the deficit debate and speak to the differences between Heilbroner and Bernstein and myself. In particular, it is important to distinguish, and at the same time synthesize, short- and long-term considerations.

(1) There are serious long-term stagnationist tendencies in the United States, and in the advanced capitalist economies generally. Thus in the United States the rate of per capita growth has declined from an average of 2 percent from 1955 to 1973 to 1.3 percent from 1973 to 1986. Similar declines in long-term growth have been experienced by the other advanced economies, including Japan. Even if we narrow the focus to consider the U.S. experience only over 1983-88, the years of the "Reagan boom," we see that it was a languid boom indeed. In 1987, real wages were 16 percent below their peak of the early 1970s, the pretax corporate profit rate was less than half its peak of the mid-1960s, and the percentage of people living in poverty was 19 percent above the level of the early 1970s. Even the widely celebrated current unemployment rate of 5.3 percent—often referred to as "full employment"—is still only at a level that President Richard Nixon considered politically unacceptable in the early 1970s.

(2) This boom has indeed been fueled by Federal deficit spending, as Heilbroner and Bernstein suggest. But it is important not to underestimate the size of the current deficits, as I think Heilbroner and Bernstein have done. Over the 1983-87 expansion, official deficits ranged between 3.3 percent and 6.1 percent of the gross national product, exactly the range that Heilbroner and Bernstein say prevailed in the mid-1930s and would today "exert a real push" despite structural obstacles.

(3) Undoubtedly, by any reasonable standard of economic justice as well as the needs of long-term growth, the deficit funds would have been more beneficially employed had a larger proportion gone toward education, infrastructure and research and development rather than the military. But we must also recognize that the short-term effect on employment and production of \$1 of deficit-financed military spending isn't very different from \$1 of deficit-financed spending

on education. The point then is that contemporary deficits are giving the economy a real short-term boost. Why then aren't these deficits leading to more rapid growth, full employment and higher wages?

(4) The explanation I suggested was that because the economy's structural problems—internationalization as well as stagnation—are real, serious and persistent, deficit spending has had a diminishing ability to stimulate the economy. This would be true, moreover, even if the deficit funds were used in a more socially desirable way. A primary indicator of structural difficulties has been the declining rate of investment growth in productive activities. In large measure, this is due to the decline in corporate profitability and the associated rise of leveraged buyouts, which involve trading ownership shares in existing plant and equipment rather than building new productive capacity. Corporations are also now ready to relocate production to new low-wage, nonunion regions if wage concessions aren't maintained in their traditional U.S. sites. Because corporations are less willing to invest in productive capacity in the United States, deficit spending has become less effective in stimulating investment here. This means that larger and larger deficits are required to obtain increasingly weaker stimuli. And as this pattern continues, the negative effects of deficit spending grow correspondingly in their relative impact. For example, as Heilbroner and Bernstein recognize in their book, interest payments on the deficits are the fastest growing major component of the Federal budget, absorbing 14 percent of the 1987 budget as opposed to 9 percent in 1980 and 7 percent in 1970. This has negative distributional consequences, since the overwhelming share of the government's interest payments flow from the average taxpayer to the richest 10 percent of the population, those who own about 80 percent of government bonds (either directly or indirectly through owning the corporations or banks that directly hold most of the debt.)

(5) Thus, while I agree with Heilbroner and Bernstein that deficit spending does work as a short-term stimulus, where we depart is over my observation that, because of the economy's structural problems, the stimulative effects of deficit spending are growing weaker over time while its negative side-effects strengthen. A sharp reallocation of government spending such as Heilbroner and Bernstein propose will address this problem to some extent. But even with such changes, the basic control over large-scale investment and production decisions—the decisions that give the economy its direction and momentum—will remain in the hands of a few private capitalists. They will still have the power to play the takeover game, to hold

(Continued on Page 616)

CONTENTS.

Volume 249, Number 17

EXCHANGE

586

Robert Heilbroner
Peter Bernstein, Robert Pollin

EDITORIALS

585 "Nixon in China": Part 2

587 German Questions

588 Fetal Position Zillah Eisenstein

589 Plutonium Con Karl Grossman and Judith Long

COLUMNS

590 Minority Report Christopher Hitchens

ARTICLES

585 HUD/E.P.A. Slush Funds:
The White House Connection

Murray Waas

Illustrations by Seymour Chwast

591 Return to Ward Holler:

Down Here on the Edge of Things

Andy Yale

592 Cross Fire in the Drug War:

Aftermath of a Crack Article

Jefferson Morley

597 Crime, Drugs and the Media:

The Black Pathology Biz

Ishmael Reed

598 Letter From Europe:

Revolutionary Nostalgia

Daniel Singer

BOOKS & THE ARTS

605 Friedman: From Beirut to Jerusalem

Micah L. Sifry

607 Ehrenreich: Fear of Falling:

The Inner Life of the Middle Class

Joshua Henkin

608 Tao-Chi (poem)

Stephen Mitchell

609 Theater

Thomas M. Disch

613 Art

Arthur C. Danto

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EDITORIALS.

German Questions

The retreat of the neo-Stalinist regime in East Germany before an aroused citizenry puts the German question, again, on the historical agenda. To be sure, it was always there, but cynical politicians and their captive "experts" (German and non-German) preferred to table it. They used a multiplicity of devices, all of them disingenuous and most of them dishonest, to depict the postwar settlement as eternal. In 1952 the Adenauer government refused Stalin's offer to exchange reunification for German neutrality—while proclaiming an unalterable wish for reunification. American and allied leaders have ritual-

ized demands that the Berlin wall come down, secure in the conviction that it would remain standing, and that they need not renounce West Germany's 495,000 troops and 1.2 million reserves, or NATO's plans to make of both Germanies a nuclear battlefield.

The most recent (and most fatuous) instance of this cold war mind-set is George Bush's recent *New York Times* interview. He declared himself unfazed by the prospect of German reunification, making it clear that he thought this meant the incorporation of the Democratic Republic by the Federal Republic. After all, he said, Chancellor Kohl had telephoned him to assure him that West Germany was not neutralist. A Gallup poll reported that same day in West Germany showed that a majority of the respondents favored

denuclearization and that over 40 percent of West Germans wanted to leave NATO.

Now that the issue is posed, most of the responses are marked by anxiety, disorientation and ignorance. Many Western Europeans fear the economic power of a reunified Germany. The French in particular seem unable to put 1914 and 1939 behind them. Memories of Nazi depredations, evoked by the actions of noisy revanchists on the German right, also disturb the Czechoslovaks and above all the Poles. By contrast, the Soviet Union's political elite is relatively sanguine about the German future.

It is useful to recall that West Germany (even with the East added) is not a superpower but a middle-sized one, its prosperity dependent on economic integration with the rest of Europe. What is new in German history is that a majority in West Germany (and now, apparently, in East Germany as well) is committed to parliamentary democracy and political pluralism. A majority of the people in both states are decidedly unmilitaristic. West German draft boards are overflowing with applications for alternative service, and the East German opposition has made antimilitarism a major theme. Fantasies of an aggressive Germany are precisely that, fantasies.

The Germans cannot be denied the rights of national self-determination we so loudly demand for others. That much said, a majority of Germans in East and West are skeptical about the desirability or necessity of immediate reunification. The opposition in East Germany wants the democratization of state socialism. The West Germans do not wish to see their welfare state swamped by millions of new arrivals from the G.D.R. West Germany's political elite is in fact working closely with the Soviet Union to pressure East Germany to introduce reforms that could stabilize that state. West German President Richard von Weizsäcker has said that the future of the German nation need not involve one state. The German nation lived, after all, for a large part of its history in separate states.

West German Minister for Foreign Affairs Hans-Dietrich Genscher has a larger view. Drawing on ideas also developed by Willy Brandt and the Social Democrats and now espoused by the Christian Democrats too, he thinks the German problem can be solved only in a Europeanized Europe. That is, it can be solved when Europe's two halves detach themselves from their respective superpowers and become more autonomous, as well as ever more interrelated in culture, economy and politics. The West Germans (and interestingly the French) have taken the lead in a large European aid package for Hungary and Poland. Kohl has offered large amounts of economic aid to East Germany on the condition that it undertake serious reforms. As these steps are taken, parallel arms control measures could drastically reduce superpower troops and nuclear weapons on German soil. The eventual withdrawal of the superpowers from Germany

could be negotiated with the Germans and the other Europeans, East and West. The "utopian" goals of the peace movement are, increasingly, matters for political realists.

The U.S. foreign policy-makers, as usual, limp querulously behind events. They would do well to recognize that the Germans (and the other Europeans) have taken the measure of America's reduced circumstances and that their patience with the obsolescent ideological goods purveyed in Washington is exhausted. Rebukes to the Germans for their "nationalism" from those who openly avow an American world mission evoke ridicule. The American public would profit by ridding itself of demonic images of Nazism reborn. The Germans are more likely, in the end, to resemble the Swedes.

Fetal Position

President Bush has no consistent or principled position on abortion. He never has. Recent history shows that he sways with the political winds. This was demonstrated again when he vetoed Federal funding of abortions for victims of rape or incest.

Before his association with Ronald Reagan, Bush had no absolute opposition to abortion. As Reagan's running mate, in 1980, he adopted the position that abortion was permissible only to protect the life of the mother. Otherwise, abortion was the taking of a human life and therefore unacceptable. The rights of the "unborn" superseded all other rights for Bush.

As Vice President, Bush, supporting Reagan, was opposed to the *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion. As presidential hopeful at the 1988 debates, Bush implied that, although he had not thought about it very much, if abortions were made illegal he probably would have to treat women who get abortions as criminals. Then he shifted his position again, saying he did not mean that women should be treated as criminals but rather as victims. Doctors should be treated as criminals. (Perhaps Bush thinks that only men are doctors, and therefore rational and accountable. Women on the other hand are merely victims.)

Most recently, when asked whether he would veto the House's proposed extension of Federal funding for abortions for poor women in cases of rape or incest, he responded affirmatively at a press conference: "I'm not looking for any conflict on this. I'm not going to change my position any. But let's see how those negotiations come out. . . . but I have not changed my position."

One wonders which position he was speaking of. When asked if he might accept a compromise he stated flatly that a compromise was out of the question. Then again, he also said that there might be some room for flexibility. He explained a bit. "The conference language may be able to avoid a veto on my part" if the criterion for abortion funding were changed from rapes "promptly" reported to rapes reported in forty-eight hours. His reason: to prevent women from using false claims of rape to finance their abortions.

If this still isn't clear, Bush now says that his only concern is to protect the taxpayer. It is an issue of overseeing the

NEXT WEEK

Andrew Kopkind on the U.S. and Ortega

"management and implementation of Federal taxpayer dollars, and whether you can control them." He wants to stop the potential abuse by women of federally financed abortions, "women who falsely asserted they have been raped in order to get the government to pay for their abortions."

So now we finally have it. Bush will veto publicly financed abortions for rape and incest victims because he assumes that women lie about rape and are cheats. Forgotten is his position on the rights of the unborn.

Bush's waffling, and now his stonewalling, won't work. He has shown himself to be opportunistic and shallow; standing firm at this point only makes him look inept. He is caught in a bankrupt position.

ZILLAH EISENSTEIN

Zillah Eisenstein is chair of the department of politics at Ithaca College. Her most recent book is The Female Body and the Law (University of California Press).

Plutonium Con

The Galileo space probe was launched on October 19 amid controversy over its highly toxic payload of 49.25 pounds of plutonium, which provides heat and electricity for its instruments [see Grossman and Long, "Nuclear Slingshot," October 2]. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration claimed there was no substitute for plutonium as a power source on projects such as the Galileo mission to Jupiter. But government-authorized studies recently released to us under the Freedom of Information Act show that scientists under contract to NASA regarded solar energy as a feasible alternative for Galileo and for other space probes as well.

In the weeks preceding the Galileo launch NASA stuck to its claim that there was no alternative to plutonium for these missions. In a "Safety Fact Sheet," for example, the agency said, "Because other power alternatives are too massive or too weak . . . the RTG [plutonium-powered generator] is the safest, most efficient and effective power system."

However, studies conducted for NASA by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of the California Institute of Technology contradict NASA's claims. One of the laboratory's reports says, "Based on the current study, it appears that a Galileo Jupiter orbiting mission could be performed with a concentrated photovoltaic solar array power source without changing the mission sequence or impacting science objectives. . . . concentrated solar arrays (CSA) are a potentially viable alternative to RTG's despite the difficulties posed by the Galileo mission."

A diagram accompanying the report shows a CSA to be a system of mirrors on "wings" attached to the space probe. The mirrors focus sunlight onto photovoltaic cells, which convert it to electricity. The electricity charges batteries on the probe.

Another document stresses the high cost of the kind of RTGs used on the Galileo probe and which NASA plans to utilize on a series of future space probes. This analysis says, "Historically, the cost of the fuel for an RTG power source

has been 'subsidized' by DOE [Department of Energy], resulting in a relatively low RTG cost to NASA. . . . Existing estimates of the RTG fuel costs range up to \$3,500 per thermal watt. If NASA is required to assume these costs or a significant portion of them, the RTG cost per mission could be prohibitive within the context of a constrained budget." The report concludes, "Photovoltaic solar arrays offer a low cost solution for powering a number of far earth missions."

When told of the reports Representative George Hochbrueckner of New York, a member of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, which oversees NASA, was shocked. "NASA has been telling us over and over again that there is no alternative to plutonium—and now this. Why did we have to undertake the tremendous risk with plutonium in light of these reports?" he asked. "We took a big risk with Galileo and we happened to be lucky. Now we have to make sure we don't undergo an unnecessary risk again with future probes."

Future NASA missions include the Ulysses probe, to be launched next year, which will establish a north-south orbit of the sun. It will carry 25.6 pounds of plutonium. In 1995, the Comet Rendezvous Asteroid Flyby, or CRAF mission, will pursue a comet and penetrate an asteroid belt. In 1996 the Cassini launch will explore Saturn and its moon Titan. Like Galileo, these space probes are slated to be launched by a Challenger-type space shuttle and to carry 49.25 pounds of plutonium.

Michio Kaku, professor of nuclear physics at the City University of New York, who for years has advocated using solar energy and other alternative sources of power on the Galileo and related space probe missions, said when informed of the reports, "NASA officials deliberately concealed information from the American people." He asked, "Why have they been lying to us? Why were they insisting that there were no alternatives to plutonium when alternatives were—and are—available and viable? It's because they have a hidden agenda for the RTGs: use in a future Star Wars system." Indeed, starting in the mid-1990s, the government plans a series of launches of nuclear devices in space for military purposes, including orbiting nuclear reactors that would provide the power for the Strategic Defense Initiative.

According to Kaku, solar energy could be problematic for military use in space. The "flower-like" solar collectors would be sighted easily by radar, making the space-borne military devices "sitting ducks. But having these small nuclear power packs reduces the radar image." Facing budget constraints, NASA, he said, also sees a "bonanza" in joining in military plans for the nuclearization of space. "The military wants all kinds of nuclear power packs up there, including those energized by hydrogen bombs. That's why there's plutonium on Galileo. Galileo is the tip of an iceberg."

KARL GROSSMAN AND JUDITH LONG

Karl Grossman, a journalism professor at the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury, is the author of Cover Up: What You Are Not Supposed to Know About Nuclear Power (Permanent Press) and Power Crazy (Grove Press).

MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

The twentieth anniversary gathering of Ralph Nader's celebrated Raiders was not the sort of event that customarily lifts my heart. A lot of the guests were known lawyers. I was the only smoker. There was a cash bar from which lite beers and sodas were ordered in profusion. A sort of health consciousness and even fastidiousness was in evidence. I was reminded of Nader's bald description of his counter-hedonistic first night in Washington in 1963. "I had one suitcase. I stayed in the YMCA. Walked across a little street and had a hot dog, my last." In those days things were so tough that Nader worked in the Labor Department for Daniel Patrick Moynihan while writing on the side for *The Nation*. If that combination of images doesn't move you to pity, then you are deaf to the still, sad music of humanity.

But compared with the vulgar hog-wallow that has lately become the typical Washington event, this one smelled remarkably sweet. In the last four years of the Reagan Administration, Nader's various public interest campaigns held twenty press conferences, and *The Washington Post* came to exactly one of them. Now, with the enterprise culture turning sickly all around us, the elusive and corrupting idea of relevance and even of fashion has come to grace him again.

Not that Nader is susceptible to any version of corruption. He is not so much appalled as flat-out bewildered by the reign of money and PACs and "honoraria" and every other element in the carnival of inducement. To him, the Reagan years were "the government of the Exxons, by the General Motors and for the du Ponts," and it amazes him, as it must amaze anyone who pauses to think about it, that people will sit still for such a system. When given a detail—the spraying of Alar on that most innocent-looking of fruits, the apple, or the leaching of lead into their children's drinking water—people will pause to ask what on earth the big boys take them for. But ad hoc campaigns on such issues can suffer from diminishing returns.

Two things make me think that Nader may be on to something this time around. The first is the fantastically encouraging news from California, where Proposition 103, which called for a rollback of extortionate insurance rates, was carried by a narrow margin. That's to say that the voting margin was narrow; the funding margin—\$70 million spent by the insurance companies and \$2 million by Nader's partisans—was gigantic. An opinion poll taken at the opening of the dispute found that 67 percent of voters would be more inclined to vote for a proposition if they knew that Ralph Nader was for it. This is the kind of deep, popular trust that riffraff such as Roger Ailes and Lee Atwater will never understand and, more important, never be able to buy.

A second reason for optimism is that Nader has coined, perhaps by accident, a definition. The definition is "seller sovereignty." Not very catchy perhaps but the perfect riposte to the myth of the free market, where the "sovereign consumer" allegedly decides just as the voter (or, a cynic might add in view of Ailes and Atwater, too much so). This Friedmanite babble has had a clear run in the past decade

and has left us with insider traders, junk-bond merchants and politicians who would pay for the pleasure of selling themselves, to say nothing of the most casual polluters and poisoners. "Seller sovereignty," as a tool of analysis, offers the chance of knitting many diverse campaigns and grievances into a generalized critique of monopoly and those who whistle its jingles.

If everybody did have his or her price, as our rulers believe upon examination of their own characters, then the Nicaraguan revolution would have been bought out long ago. In fact, our rulers hired people too much like themselves, in the shape of the corrupt and homicidal *contras*, and failed to mount even the vestige of a political challenge to the Sandinistas. But as William Morris used to say, there is the argument of force and there is the argument of fraud. Force having damaged chiefly the U.S. Constitution, fraud is now being tried upon a people who have kept on stubbornly voting and speaking and resisting through years of mercenary sabotage and assassination.

A recent document written by Edgar Chamorro is of particular interest. Having been selected by the C.I.A. to conduct the propaganda war for the *contras*, he resigned in disgust when he realized the nature of the force he was whitewashing. He has now set himself to monitor the \$9 million (for a registered electorate of under 2 million in a country with tragic inflation) that Congress has appropriated to bend the results of Nicaragua's election.

As in the case of Afghanistan, the dough is directed not to those who match a democratic ideal but to those who understand the ancient relationship between the pay and the piper. Violeta Chamorro, the chosen candidate of the hard right (only tangentially related to Edgar), is the sole recipient of U.S. aid for her UNO coalition. As Edgar Chamorro puts it:

I should point out that there is other significant political opposition in the electoral process, especially the Conservative Democratic Party and the coalition of Social Christian parties who form a democratic center, but as they refuse to enter the U.S.-directed UNO coalition, they get none of this assistance.

Foreign funding of political campaigns, let alone foreign government funding of them, is outlawed in most democratic countries and very strictly forbidden in the United States. But not apparently by the United States, which claims the right to suborn elections in a country that it has spent ten years reducing to beggary and privation. In the closing week of October, a compliant and PAC-sodden Congress voted to renew economic sanctions against an underdeveloped nation it had already voted to ruin by "humanitarian aid." With the black humor in which Nicaraguans have learned to specialize, Edgar Chamorro points out that the embargo compels UNO and its toadies to spend their bribes buying Japanese cars and sound trucks. Nicaraguans can laugh, but where is the shame on the part of those who vote so carelessly to intensify their misery?

ARTICLES.

■ RETURN TO WARD HOLLER

Down Here on the Edge of Things

ANDY YALE

The creek runs by the front door, that is the central fact. I have just recognized it. That and the papery texture of last year's wasp nest taking flame in the wood stove, the faint radiance of glowworms in the midnight grass, the smell and feel of ripened leaf mold, the sight of the stars as they walk over the hill—these are the facts I'm sure of.

It's hard to describe this place, its weight on the body, the shapes it makes in the mind, the quiet way it binds the heart. It would be easy to speak of the three miles of woods rising empty behind us, innocent of house or path, the sibilant course of the creek between its attendant ridges, the tall second-growth poplar arrow-straight against the sky, the stickweed and briars in the abandoned fields. I could tell you about our cabin, built from poplar logs we cut on the ridge, perched on a small flat above the creek, half a mile down a rough lane from the state road, the last house in the holler. I might describe our neighbors, try to plot the rhythm of their speech, retell the story of their native goodness, spin out the long tale of their origin. But none of this would capture the essence of being here, which is like a high voice calling on the edge of sleep. None of it would really tell you how it is.

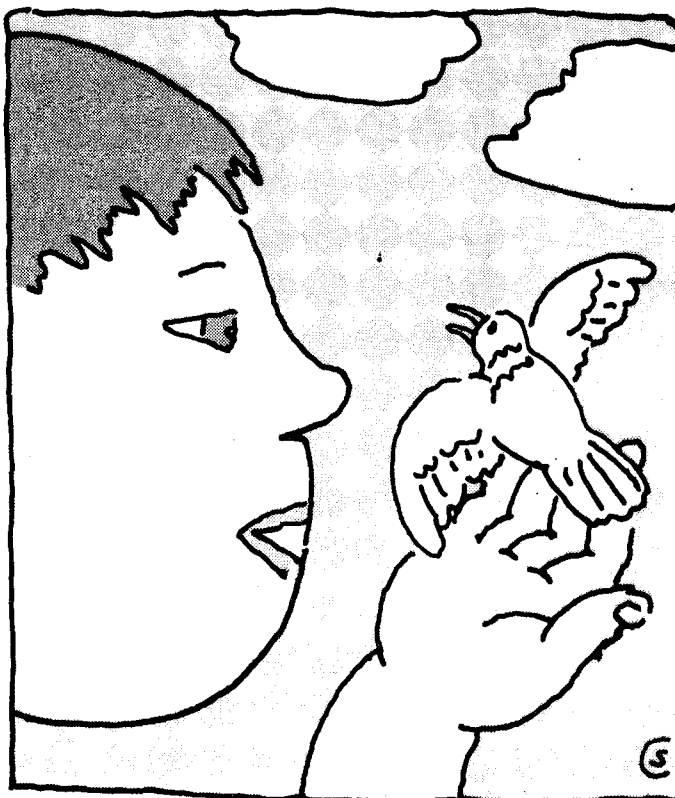
You ask where we are. We are in the Southern mountains, in a half-built house, in the country where the car is always breaking down, on the edge of the wilderness. Hummingbirds abound here in season, orange flowers and sweet scents at evening. It is also true that there is garbage in the creeks: old tires, jagged metal, parts of machines. This place is not simple, nor does it lend itself to being written about.

This cabin I sit in is on the lower end of a steep mountain farm, on the northern edge of one of the southernmost counties of a Southern mountain state. A Ward family lived here through enough generations to give the place a name—our older neighbors still call it Ward Holler. It's four miles from the cabin door to a post office and general store, ten more miles to the county seat, where a red brick courthouse broods over the death throes of a once bustling railroad town, 600 miles from New York City, from where we came. Or perhaps it's 600 blinks of disbelief, six lifetimes, another century, a different time. It's a quarter-mile over the hill to the nearest neighbors, forty miles to a stationery store, 300 feet to the waterfall on our creek. The shoulder of the

mountain we're perched on is 2,800 feet above sea level, but there are times when it feels a lot closer to heaven than that. All this is part of where we are. We call it home, and that, too, defines its location.

Yet perhaps all this means nothing to you, not having been here to feel the high winds roll over this place at the change of the seasons. Perhaps you need a word to turn over in your mind, a set of statistics, a page torn from the encyclopedia. Then it would be easy to tell you that this is Appalachia, and wait for the pictures to rise in your head, and your words to bring them forth as questions. And in answer I would say, "Yes, it is poor; yes, some people do live in tarpaper shacks and trailers; yes, barter, food stamps and trade make up 60 percent of the local economy, and welfare has become a way of life for many. And yes, the mines are closing. The big timber is gone, the creeks muddy from overburden and clearcutting." And then I would have to tell you that none of that is where we are, and all of it is, because the emanations of the land here are so strong that they take many forms, and they are so powerful that they transcend all the attacks man has made on these mountains. And finally I would tell you that this is a place rich with constant flux, like a mirror in which many things can be seen, always changing. *That* is where we are, in a rough country on the edge of vision.

So why are we here, and how did we manage to leave the city and our well-paid jobs, and was it quite sane to bring a 6-week-old baby to a half-built house so far from everything we knew? Well, perhaps I should tell you that though I am a stranger here, I had become far more of a stranger to New York City, where I was born, and that exile in one's native



ILLUSTRATIONS BY SEYMOUR CHWAST

Andy Yale is a freelance photographer and journalist. His "Letter From Ward Holler," on politics and daily life in Appalachia, will appear in future issues.

place is not a burden I chose to bear. Don't think that I don't miss New York, because I do, but what I miss is what it might have been for all of us, not what it has become. We were living in a crackerbox apartment in the West Village, and the vibes coming up from the street were getting worse and worse. It wasn't just crack and AIDS; it was what we saw stamped on almost every face: the greed, the veneer of arrogance covering inner fear, the selfishness and anger and alienation. It was touching us; we couldn't keep it at bay much longer. A bitter, divisive wind was blowing through the city while people sat in cafes and talked of real estate, oblivious to the homeless begging at the door. I couldn't stand to be part of it any longer, not even as a witness. Leaving wasn't easy, but we did it. We headed South toward the call of these mountains.

It was a call I had been hearing for a long time. I first came here in 1968, still in high school, to spend the summer on Don West's farm. You might have heard his name—it haunted the edges of left-wing circles for forty years or more. He was an old-time union organizer in the bad days, the kind who carried a gun, and he knew how to use it if push came to shove. On top of that he was what used to be called a "people's poet"; he wrote class-conscious ballads about his native Appalachia. So it's not surprising that there was a brief love affair between West and segments of the New York left, but it soured badly for reasons I can only guess. By the time I met him, he was in his 60s, tall, gaunt, fierce and uncompromising in word and deed. Along with a bunch of other inner-city kids and some Quaker counselors, I was helping him build a regional folklore center. But that was all beside the point. It was the mountains that were entrancing me.

The place grabbed me quick and hard. It was sure different from Brooklyn. I swore I'd come back, and as if to make that possible, I became friendly with a guy who used to visit Don West that summer. He was a published poet in his early 40s who had just bought a farm some fifteen miles away that was to become the first commune in the state. Somehow I maintained contact with its founder, and a year after I got out of high school, after ten months of night shift in the post office, I was back in the mountains. Two years later, on my nineteenth birthday, I bought the place in Ward Holler with a \$200 deposit and a handshake. That was the way things were down here then.

So, you see, we had this place. We knew it already—the clear water running from the mountain, the quiet so intense you can hear all the secret voices singing. We'd seen the wild turkey explode into flight up the holler, felt the vast age of these ancient hills. So it wasn't just what we were leaving driving us forward; it was where we were going calling us on.

There was something else that demanded our going. When I first looked into our son's eyes, some minutes after his birth, he returned my gaze with a steady clarity that moved something deep inside me. It was the old thing that I suppose all parents feel—the desire to honor an unsullied consciousness. I wasn't naïve enough or so grandiose as to imagine I could steer him clear of all suffering. But there was something I could give him, a place where he could still

be linked to the great chain of being, a creature among creatures under a wide sky.

It had been a difficult delivery and he stayed in the hospital with his mother for over a week. Each day I would carry him to the window to show him the city. The West Village was spread out beneath us, with the Hudson glinting bright along its edges. I held him up to look out, asked him to remember this was where he'd been born. I didn't want him to forget that great concentration of energy and vision, that city that is every place and all places and no place. I wanted him to honor it, even if it was a dream gone sour, a brilliant jewel fallen into the keeping of greedy madmen.

About this place to which we have brought him, down here on the edge of things, I have no doubts. He sits on the back porch as I write this, 6 months old, gazing with placid eyes at the mountains, lifting his head to sniff the wind. Seeing his contentment reassures me, lets me put aside all my questions. He reminds me to look up at the high clouds moving like great messengers, going with the wind into the West. □

■ CROSS FIRE IN THE DRUG WAR

Aftermath of a Crack Article

JEFFERSON MORLEY

I smoked crack and wrote an article about it for *The New Republic*. As I had hoped, "What Crack Is Like" instigated many debates within the Washington political class and attracted more than a little interest outside that cloistered group. The article made three points, all of which will strike some people as self-evident: Crack is a pleasurable drug with unpleasant side effects; crack can "make sick sense to demoralized people" and the spread of crack capitalism is related to the phenomenon of Reaganism. That same week I published a historical-economic analysis of the drug problem in *The Nation* ("Contradictions of Cocaine Capitalism," October 2), which initially drew little media attention, no doubt because it was a more substantive article. In fact, the reactions to the *New Republic* piece were more interesting than the piece itself. The peculiarities of our so-called drug war and the desire for a new debate about the problem have never been more evident.

By noon of the day *The New Republic* rolled off the presses William Bennett had described my piece as "garbage" and called me "a defector in the drug war." In this compliment I resented only Bennett's implication that I was a soldier, not a citizen, and somehow bound to salute his efforts. Over the weekend, the usual suspects from the Sunday morning talk shows—Pat Buchanan, Robert Novak, Al Hunt—reiterated Bennett's criticisms, often word for word: "garbage," "irresponsible" and so on.

What especially galled the pundits was my remark that "if all you have in life is bad choices, crack may not be the

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most unpleasant of them." No one said this statement was untrue, as Michael Kinsley, editor of *The New Republic*, pointed out in my defense—only that it was "unhelpful." Indeed, R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr., editor of *The American Spectator*, expressed a journalistic philosophy no longer current, even at *Pravda*. Tyrrell said my article was "contemptible" because I did not express support for benevolent state efforts to wipe out market activity.

Stephen Rosenfeld, a foreign policy columnist for *The Washington Post*, at least tried to debate the issue, devoting a confused column to my article. The ink not spent on abusing my person was spent quoting a Washington public health official about the crack experience. Rosenfeld was so excited that he never noticed the official's description of the crack experience in no way contradicted my own. The damaging effects of addiction to drug war rhetoric were evident. Rosenfeld asserted that crack "withers the mothering instinct" among female users. Exactly how the drug does this, biologically and chemically, he was unable to explain.

The following Monday morning, I went on C-Span, the public affairs cable channel, and exchanged pleasantries with Brian Lamb, a conservative gentleman and a soothing interlocutor. Wasn't I condoning the use of crack? Lamb inquired. If anything I was discouraging it, I said. The curious could learn about the drug from my article. If they took it seriously, they would learn that in one man's very limited experience, crack's pleasure quickly gave way to its side effects, combining "the worst of marijuana and cocaine" and inducing both stupefaction and paranoia. "Let's go to the phones," Lamb said, eyes twinkling. He was enjoying the prospect of my imminent pasting by the *vox populi*.

Thirteen of the next fifteen callers approved of my article, several of them using the same phrase, "I'm with you 100 percent." What came through most consistently in the comments was a sense of relief at hearing someone in the media say something—anything—outside the rhetorical consensus of just-say-no and zero-tolerance.

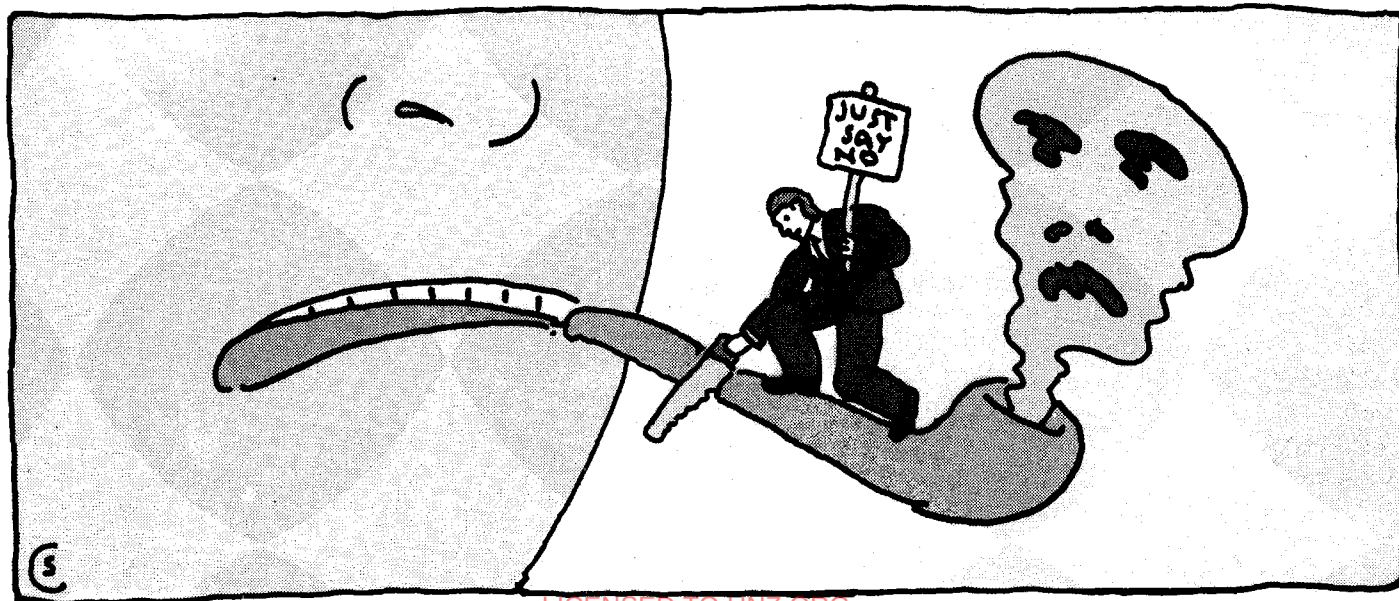
I went on radio talk shows in Washington, Milwaukee, Detroit and Boston. "What's crack like?" my interviewers

inevitably wanted to know. Or did they? Crack has been around for six years and smoked by millions of Americans. I asked several of these media representatives if they had ever posed the question to the many available crack users in their home towns. Most had not. They were such loyal soldiers in the drug war that they had forgotten to do their jobs. Others said that they regarded local crack smokers as less reliable and less interesting than me. "You're a real person," one TV reporter said in a revealing slip. "I mean, you're a real, articulate person."

The inevitable second question was, "They say you smoke crack once and you're addicted. Are you addicted?" The answer was no. I often replied by asking why they believed that one-time crack use leads to addiction. "That's what everybody says," answered Mark Belling, a talk show host in Milwaukee. Had he ever conducted a survey of crack users in his city to answer the question for himself? Neither he nor any other journalist critical of my article had ever attempted such reporting. (In fact, *Harper's* magazine reported in November that six out of ten crack users eventually become addicted, compared with nine out of ten cigarette users.)

My mother liked the article; my father hated it. He called to tell me I'd made a "big mistake." He said that I was an elitist wise-ass in the worst *New Republic* tradition who had trivialized a terrible problem by drawing attention to myself and not to the real issues involved. This criticism left me depressed for a week. Like the Sunday morning gasbags, my father is a Reaganite. Unlike them, he knows what he's talking about. He's a journalist who knows and works with the neighborhood activists who are trying to extirpate the crack economy block by block in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

When I attempted to say something about challenging the Bennett propaganda barrage, he cut me off. "What's Bill Bennett got to do with the crack problem?" he demanded. A good question. I admit that I couldn't dismiss entirely his argument that even to join this spurious Washington debate, especially in the provocative way that I did, was "counterproductive."



The personal letters I received were supportive by a margin of about ten to one. "The criticism that you lacked sufficient reverence for the drug problem seems to me symptomatic of the very hysteria that you pointed out," wrote Dave Hage, a newspaper reporter from the Twin Cities. "I may take an even stronger position than you—that this drug hysteria is a grotesque deception and a classic case of inventing a problem we'd like to solve so we can ignore problems we don't want to solve."

The letters to *The New Republic*, on the other hand, were critical by a margin of fifteen to eight. The charge of irresponsibility recurred, most compellingly from people with firsthand experience in the drug problem. Michael Kellogg, a former prosecutor from the Bronx now living in Washington, said, "I felt nothing but sorrow for the kids who used and sold crack as a means of escaping their already blighted lives. I feel nothing but contempt for a twit like Morley who uses the drug to spice up his otherwise unimaginative writing."

Cynthia Malenfant of Newburyport, Massachusetts, said, "What gives him [Morley] the right to break the law?" Nothing, I had to concede. I'm in the same position as the journalist who wrote about his experiences in a speak-easy in the 1920s. I harmed no one and hardly tried to evade the consequences of my actions. I was (and am) prepared for drug enforcement agents knocking on my door, and I'm willing to go to court to testify about my actions. If the drug warriors want to get tough on that contemporary beast, "the casual user," then I am their man. But the knock never came, and I'm confident it never will. I have access to expert legal counsel and to the media. The drug warriors prefer to go after casual users who have fewer defenses.

The most original point was made by Kenneth Anderson of New York City, who said my article was "a print version of that *other* much-publicized, equally exploitative Washington drug buy." Anderson, of course, was referring to the drug enforcement agents' buy of three ounces of crack in Lafayette Park prior to President Bush's nationally televised address on drugs in early September. Anderson's analogy was apt, but I would add that Bush "used" crack to make a point that was frankly dishonest—despite what millions of Americans have been told by the President, you can't buy crack in Lafayette Park. I used crack to make points that were at least debatable.

I could tell the controversy was dying out when Abe Rosenthal, senior columnist for *The New York Times*, called. "Very interesting, very interesting," he said. Could I spare a few moments to answer some questions? I understood these sonorities to mean that he was preparing a vicious hatchet job on me.

"Ask away," I replied nervously.

How many times had I used cocaine in my life?

"Well, I'll put it this way, Mr. Rosenthal," I said. "I've used cocaine fewer times than Fawn Hall." (*The Washington Post* reported last summer that Hall had told drug enforcement agents investigating a local cocaine dealer that she had used cocaine some forty times while working for Oliver North.)

"And how many times have you used marijuana?"

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I thought: Is this news that's fit to print? I said: "My favorite recreational drug is Miller Lite."

"Miller Lite," he murmured, as if I had uttered a pleasantry in Swedish, and he had to pretend, out of sheer politeness, to comprehend the meaning of such a strange expression. "Millerlite. Millerlite." End of interview. Rosenthal wisely decided not to write about me.

Since then, I've been receiving many more calls asking about my *Nation* article on the cocaine economy. I spent an hour on the phone lines on "The Mike Cuthbert Show" on WAMU here in Washington, and every caller save one was dissatisfied with the national drug debate. Jay Marvin, a talk show host on WTKN in Tampa, wanted to hear about banks in Florida that launder drug money. Jean (Queen) Steinberg, a talk show host on WQBH, a black community station in Detroit, was hoping for a wide-ranging discussion with her listeners. And "Addiction-Free Radio" (then KJIM, now KFRR) in Boulder, Colorado, was especially receptive to alternative views on the drug war.

The new drug debate is hindered by the realities of our political culture. Representative Charles Rangel, appearing with me on *Larry King Live*, said that the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 was a mistake. Rangel, of course, doesn't really want to ban alcohol. As a career politician, he just can't imagine entrusting the American people with the task of controlling antisocial behavior. Then again, he is a Congressman from Harlem, a devastated community that has little reason to entrust its fate to the American sense of social responsibility. If we were all more civic-minded, Ran-

gel's constituents would not be in such bad shape. Rangel's lack of faith in the collective social responsibility required to make drug reform succeed is understandable, if self-defeating.

"So what's your answer?" Rangel, a drug prohibitionist at wit's end, said to me, "Legalize?"

Well, yes. But legalization is only the beginning. The so-called war on drugs is no substitute for social policy—despite what the Bush Administration pretends. And neither is drug legalization. The drug crisis in the United States is really two crises: a crisis of public health that has created millions of untreated drug addicts and a crisis of economic opportunity that has created millions of unregulated and untaxed drug entrepreneurs.

Current government policy is to eliminate these problems by coercively discouraging the desire, exhibited in the actions of as many as 50 million Americans, to use marijuana and cocaine. Few believe this experiment in social engineering will succeed. Bennett's aides routinely tell reporters that they don't expect to "win" the war on drugs for a generation; as much as 80 percent of the public say that they don't expect current policies to solve the problem. Yet in public debate most elected officials feel obliged to pledge allegiance to the government's fantasy. And many journalists feel it's not their job to question the officials who are promoting it.

Other journalists and citizens believe the public health problems related to crack are so severe that any discussion of pleasurable casual crack use in the media is irresponsible, even (especially) if it is accurate. Their intentions—to try to prevent crack from taking over any more lives—are unimpeachable, but I think they are also reinforcing the unreal drug debate. In fact, the drug experience is governed not just by the drug, but also by the person who uses it and the social setting in which he or she uses it. If I could rewrite my article, I would say even more explicitly that I was reporting on my own unique crack experience, which has no necessary implications for how anyone else would experience the drug.

Then why write about it? Because writing about my drug use did have one implication for other people: that it could be informative and useful to discuss drugs in ways that are considered unacceptable by the moral custodians of the current drug debate. That spurious debate, as even my sober Reaganite father knows, promises virtually nothing for the pathetic people whose only solace is crack. It trifles with the safety of policemen on the beat, who are asked to risk their lives to do the impossible, and it compromises our civil liberties in pursuit of the illusory (and undesirable) vision of a drug-free America.

Taken together, my *Nation* and *New Republic* articles suggest that our unreal drug debate ghettoizes the social problems generated by the drug economy. In the process, it removes from public debate the rewards of the drug economy: the political and financial opportunities now enjoyed by drug bankers and testers, by ambitious bureaucrats and sycophantic journalists and, most of all, by politicians who prefer to ignore the country's social crises. I think a lot of people intuitively understand this, which is why interest is beginning to shift from what crack is like to the contradictions of cocaine capitalism. □

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■ CRIME, DRUGS AND THE MEDIA

The Black Pathology Biz

ISHMAEL REED

Black pathology is big business. Two-thirds of teenage mothers are white, two-thirds of welfare recipients are white and white youth commit most of the crime in this country. According to a recent survey, reported by the *Oakland Tribune*, the typical crack addict is a middle-class white male in his 40s. Michele Norris of *The Washington Post* has cited a study that discovered "no significant difference in the rate of drug use during pregnancy among women in the public clinics that serve a largely indigent population and those visiting private doctors who cater to upper-income patients." Yet in the popular imagination blacks are blamed for all these activities, in the manner that the Jews took the rap for the Black Plague, even in countries with little or no Jewish population.

Now that network news shows have become "profit centers," news producers have found a lucrative market in exhibiting black pathology, while coverage of pathologies such as drug addiction, child abuse, spousal battering and crime among whites and their "model minorities" is negligible. According to the news shows, you'd think that two black gangs, the Crips and the Bloods, are both the cause and the result of the nation's drug problem, even though this country was high long before these children were born.

When it comes to singling out blacks as the cause of America's social problems, NBC and CNN are the worst offenders. (The owner of CNN, Ted Turner, once proposed that unemployed black males be hired to carry nuclear warheads on their backs; when pressed he said that he was only kidding.)

Let's look at just one month: October of last year. General Electric's *NBC Nightly News* ran stories on child abuse, drug trafficking and cocaine pregnancy. Blacks were the actors in all these news shows, yet the August 30, 1988, front page of *The New York Times* reported that there is as much cocaine pregnancy in the suburbs as in the inner city. That same October, it was revealed on CNN's business program, *Moneyline*, that U.S. bankers have laundered \$100 billion in drug money, \$90 billion of which ends up overseas, contributing to the trillion dollars in debt owed by the United States, mugging millions of Americans of jobs and endangering the economic stability of the country.

Also in October, CNN did a series called "Crime in America." According to this series, whites don't commit

crimes. They're either victims or on the side of the law — the line promoted by *The New York Times*, a black pathology supermarket that regularly blames crack use, crime, welfare and illegitimacy on black people and whose journalists and columnists still use the term "black underclass" even though studies, including *Blacks and American Society*, by the National Research Council, and *The Persistence of Urban Poverty and its Demographic and Behavioral Correlates*, by Terry K. Adams and Greg J. Duncan, have been unable to locate this underclass. Its neoconservative house organ, *The New York Times Magazine*, printed in its February 26 issue a puff piece about the ex-editors of the anti-Semitic, anti-black *Dartmouth Review*.

Earlier last year, on August 20, CNN aired a special about drug-crazed Los Angeles street gangs. It proposed that gang activities were inspired by rap music. If rap music is forcing people to sell drugs, then how does one explain the participation in this industry of a Gregorian chant-loving ex-Vatican diplomat, the Rev. Lorenzo Zorza?

How convenient it is to blame everything on a scapegoat, in this case black youth, who, according to public superstitions, are responsible for all the crime in this country. Yet Gerry Spence, citing a Bureau of National Affairs estimate, writes in his book *With Justice for None: Destroying an American Myth*, that "the cost of corporate crime in America is over ten times greater than the combined larcenies, robberies, burglaries and auto-thefts committed by individuals. One in five of America's large corporations has been convicted of at least one major crime or has paid civil penalties for serious misbehavior. One way the Crips and the Bloods can improve their image is to do what the big crooks do, buy advertising on TV news shows so that their crimes will rarely be reported." The only difference between white pathology and black



Ishmael Reed is the chair of PEN's Oakland media committee, which is planning a sixty-day boycott of TV news and opinion programs. For more information write PEN Oakland, P.O. Box 70531, Station D, Oakland, California, 94612-0531.

pathology is that white pathology is underreported.

By putting out the lie that U.S. crime is black, the networks contributed millions of dollars in free advertising to Lee Atwater's most recent racist political campaign.

Presenting the fact that pathologies are widespread in American society and that American society itself might be pathological would be like showing films about lung cancer to the millions addicted to cigarette smoking. To portray America as a pathological society would interrupt the country's cozy fetal sleep, which requires that the shrill half-wits it elects to office run the sort of campaign that former Confederate officers ran in the 1880s: They threatened whites with a black rapist in every bedroom, an image that's been commercialized by some millionaire feminists in novels and movies for the last decade, proving that the black pathology industry is an equal opportunity gold mine. □

■ LETTER FROM EUROPE

Revolutionary Nostalgia

DANIEL SINGER

Paris

Slogans sometimes succeed in conveying the mood of a period. In Europe the high hopes of the 1960s were followed in the 1970s by the nostalgia of "Remember Revolution" and the desperate nihilism of "No Future." For some years, however, the establishment has been trying to channel this mood into a message of its own, telling us that there is no future other than a capitalist one, and no horizon beyond the American. These diary notes aim to show how this version of history, while greatly assisted by the current dramatic collapse of the Soviet model, still meets with considerable resistance in Europe.

Money is Moral

Quite early in the recent strike that paralyzed production of Peugeot cars for seven weeks, both at the company's Sochaux headquarters and its Mulhouse subsidiary, Peugeot president Jacques Calvet appeared on French television. He was asked why, with profits rising to \$1.3 billion a year, wages were barely keeping up with the rate of inflation. (The strikers had shown that the bulk of the firm's employees were getting less than \$1,000 a month.) The righteous boss replied that there was nothing he could do for "*mes ouvriers*"—the capitalist version of the feudal possessive did raise some eyebrows—because of the threat of foreign competition. Calvet's splendid image of himself as the self-sacrificing industrial knight, leading "his" workers into Europe and resisting Japanese and American invaders, was spoiled at once by the satirical weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné*, which printed Calvet's income tax re-

turns. These revealed not only that his monthly salary was \$30,300 but also that in the previous couple of years, while the wages of workers had risen by 7 percent, the salary of the top manager had climbed by 46 percent.

The establishment press first protested that the paper was invading the privacy of the poor rich man but rapidly realized that it had to come up with a better line. The snag, it proceeded to argue, was not that Calvet earned so much; after all, he is far from the top in the French salary league, and he earns peanuts by U.S. managerial standards. The trouble is that whereas the American tycoon is proud of his pay and flaunts it, his French equivalent conceals it as if he were ashamed. Implicit in the argument was regret that the French have not yet accepted what is said here to be the American gospel, namely that a man's worth is measured by his income; alas, the French still cannot face the fact that a tycoon is worth umpteen workers, teachers or nurses, nor admit that big money is beautiful.

Judging by the hypermarkets on the outskirts of its medium-sized towns, or by the Reaganite flu that infects a good portion of its intelligentsia, France is in the forefront of the race to Americanize Europe. But in other respects it is the chief resister. It was Paris that took the initiative in the European Community's current vain attempt to prevent the reign of *Dallasty* on European TV screens through a recommendation that at least 50 percent of the programs shown in each country should be produced in Europe. Of course, since this cultural battle is waged in commercial terms, it is doomed to end in defeat. The U.S. companies, even when owned by Japanese or Australians, have the expertise in producing slick wares, and the profits from a huge domestic market give them the opportunity to dump their programs on Europe. Yet even if European communities joined forces across frontiers, their relative success would not change much. The shows produced by a Berlusconi or a Bertelsmann, the pulp provided by a Maxwell or a Murdoch, would in no way differ from the American original [see Ben H. Bagdikian, "The Lords of the Global Village," June 12]. To overcome the stifling commercialization of culture in advanced capitalism one would have to invent a different society, whereas the message trumpeted with considerable success on both sides of the Atlantic is that capitalism is our ultimate horizon.

Danton, Dead or Alive

Paradoxically, the bicentennial of the French Revolution was supposed to play an important role in this P.R. campaign for capitalism. Indeed, the Parisian press still regularly echoes the fashionable chorus, *la révolution est terminée*, concocted by the historian François Furet and his cronies. One wonders, however, whether these gentlemen may not protest too much, and whether, on balance, the resurrected memory of the Revolution may not have a greater impact in the end than the oft-repeated record of its gravediggers.

I was thinking of this as I traveled to the Avenue Pablo Picasso in the Paris suburb of Nanterre to see the revival of Georg Büchner's celebrated play, *Danton's Death*. The theater, incidentally, is one field in which international collaboration is fruitful. In this instance, the cast was French

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but the director, German; the set designers were a Frenchman and a Spaniard. On the vast, magnificent stage of the state-subsidized Théâtre des Amandiers it all added up to an impressive performance. My only reservation was that the man who played Danton did not quite have the physical stature and stentorian voice of the revolutionary tribune. Büchner was a meteoric prodigy, barely 22 when he wrote the play in 1835; when he died two years later, he had not quite finished *Woyzeck*. But his text stands the test of time. Dealing with a revolution that is, in Büchner's words, "like Saturn as it devours its own children," the play is a plea for Danton and Danton's friend, the journalist Desmoulins, and, therefore, a plea for clemency. But it still manages to treat Robespierre with intellectual respect. Overall, it portrays revolution as a significant drama, and not, as is now too often the case, as a senseless and bloody farce.

The commemoration of the Revolution continues. If you come to Paris before the end of the year, you may still catch the major retrospective devoted to Jacques-Louis David, the great painter of the Revolution and the Empire. You may also visit exhibitions on revolutionary science, architecture and justice. Granted, the latter makes it possible to argue that now, having achieved the rule of law, we can gradually reform society within its framework. The main lesson, however, of this massive accumulation of images and information is different from what some of its planners intended: The Revolution is not just a matter of the guillotine and of a power struggle that ends in bloodshed; it is essentially a radical transformation of society in all its aspects. In that sense, Operation Furet may have backfired. This hit me the other day as I watched the news on television. When a striker was asked whether it worried him that his action was illegal, he snapped back, "So was the storming of the Bastille."

Solitary Salvation?

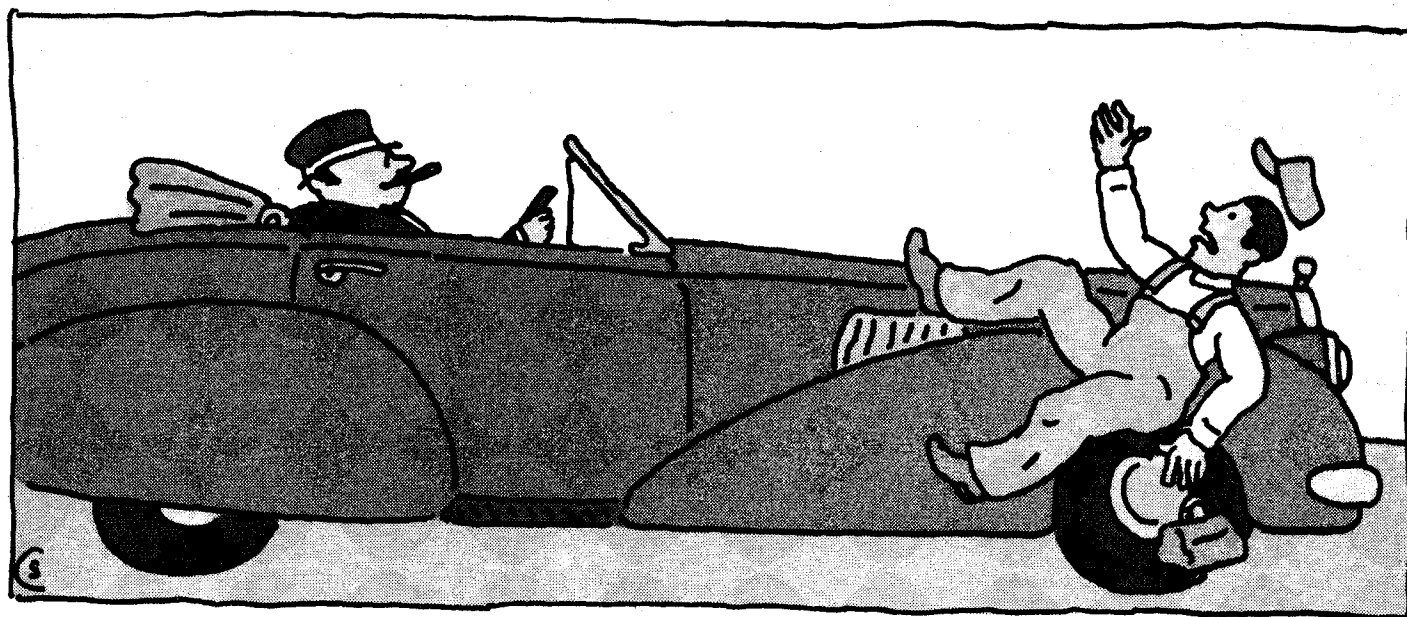
I am not trying to suggest that a sudden radical revival is under way. The mood is certainly not what it was twenty years ago. Indeed, Paris is a particularly good vantage point

from which to perceive how the reactionary winds blowing from the East and from the West feed each other. Fifteen years ago the French establishment, still shaken by the 1968 revolt and threatened by economic crisis, was greatly helped by Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* and the use that the *nouveaux philosophes* made of it to argue for the suicidal, criminal nature of all revolutions. The spread of this conservative ideological hegemony, combined with the failure of the French Socialists, once in office, to provide any alternative, contributed, in turn, to the pan-European feeling that there really is no alternative to the existing capitalist order. If one fails to bear this in mind, one cannot understand why, for example, Solidarity leaders who were full of talk about workers' self-management eight years ago are now preaching the blessings of private enterprise in almost Thatcherite terms.

Art often reflects such changes in mood. In the 1970s, on the eve of the spectacular resurrection of the Polish labor movement, the Polish filmmaker most respected in the West was Andrzej Wajda. His *Man of Marble*, the saga of one worker against the background of a country's social upheaval, could be described—though the director would not consider this flattering—as one of the few genuine successes of Socialist Realism. Today Wajda, who subsequently produced a *Danton* of his own that is both deeply hostile to the spirit of the Revolution and disappointing, is a Senator for Solidarity.

The man who is being hailed in the West as Wajda's potential successor, Krzysztof Kieslowski, is a gloomy painter of, at best, personal solutions to the human condition. The 47-year-old Kieslowski is no newcomer to the cinema, even if his Western reputation is recent. He made ten films, one for each of the Commandments, for Polish television. Two of these appeared in expanded form on the big screen. The first, *Thou Shalt Not Kill*, was the hit of this year's Venice Film Festival.

The second, *A Short Story About Love*, has just reached Paris. It is the sober, almost geometrically constructed tale of a Peeping Tom, an adolescent postman named Tommy,



who watches the eventful love life of a beautiful older woman from his rear window. The twist in the story is that the voyeur is the moralist who believes in love, while the object of his desire reduces it to the mere act of lovemaking. Some critics think the film should have ended with its climax, when the woman shows Tommy, in humiliating fashion, the carnal side of his passion; what follows, they say—his abortive suicide leading to the hint of her conversion—is Kieslowski's version of a Hollywood happy ending. Whether or not the filmmaker actually believes in redemption through love, his heroes—the Peeping Tom, his beloved, his lodger—are terribly lonely figures, painted against the gray background of a high-rise block of cheap flats and cut off from any community. It is a long way from *Man of Marble*, and a gloomy symptom of our despondent times.

Listen, Yankee

Young East Germans have been voting with their feet. Poles did so earlier with ballots, and Hungarians are scheduled to do the same next spring. The dramatic collapse of the remnants of the post-Stalinist system is being adroitly presented as the final fall of socialism and, therefore, as the ultimate proof of capitalist eternity. Francis Fukuyama's theory of the end of history (if "theory" is not too grandiose a title) has duly crossed the Atlantic. It did not create much of a stir here, however, because it is so obviously old hat. To show how unoriginal it is, I shall, with the reader's forbearance, merely quote what I said on the subject in *Is Socialism Doomed?*, which was published eighteen months ago:

The most fashionable word today seems to be the prefix *post-*. We are living in a "postindustrial" society and admiring "postmodern art." The trendy commentators are bombarding us with futuristic images of nuclear-triggered X-ray lasers, of one-world television beamed from satellites, of robots doing our work and computers our thinking. However, if you dare to ask why it is that a world changing so fantastically in so many respects must somehow be tied forever to the same forms of property and exploitation, you are dismissed as a dinosaur. On reflection, the philosophy behind this futuristic mumbo jumbo is rather old-fashioned. Like all ruling classes, the present-day one admits the existence of history up to its own triumph, although not beyond. Post-everything means capitalist forever. There was history but time must now have a stop. Europe may still move up to the American model; the United States is, by some strange malediction, condemned to the same social state forever.

Our problem is not to convince the Eastern Europeans that they can change regimes by Fabian methods; others are preaching this and the Hungarians and Poles have already begun practical exercises of their own. Nor is it, as a recent *New Republic* cover suggested, to "tell it to Peru." Why belabor the obvious by explaining to the peoples of the Third World that the "capitalist paradise" is not within their grasp? Our duty, rather, is to go to the heart of the matter and to the fortress of advanced capitalism, to persuade Western Europeans that their future is not inevitably American, and to convince the Yanks themselves that they are not doomed by some curse to social stagnation. In other

words, our task is to spread the conviction that a radical change of society in all its aspects is on our own historical agenda. In the long run, the collapse of the Stalinist model should help us in this search for a socialist alternative. For the time being, cleverly exploited, it contributes to the state of general confusion. □

White House

(Continued From Front Cover)

indicted on conflict of interest and perjury charges relating in part to her role in using Superfund grants to help elect Republican Congressional candidates. She was subsequently convicted and served four months. At her trial Federal prosecutors portrayed her as an overzealous Republican loyalist working without authorization or approval from the White House. This story was accepted by Congress and the press and remains essentially unchallenged. And to date, the Congressional probes of HUD have focused on the billions lost through fraud and mismanagement and the millions pocketed by such prominent Republicans and HUD consultants as James Watt, Paul Manafort, Carla Hills and the late John Mitchell.

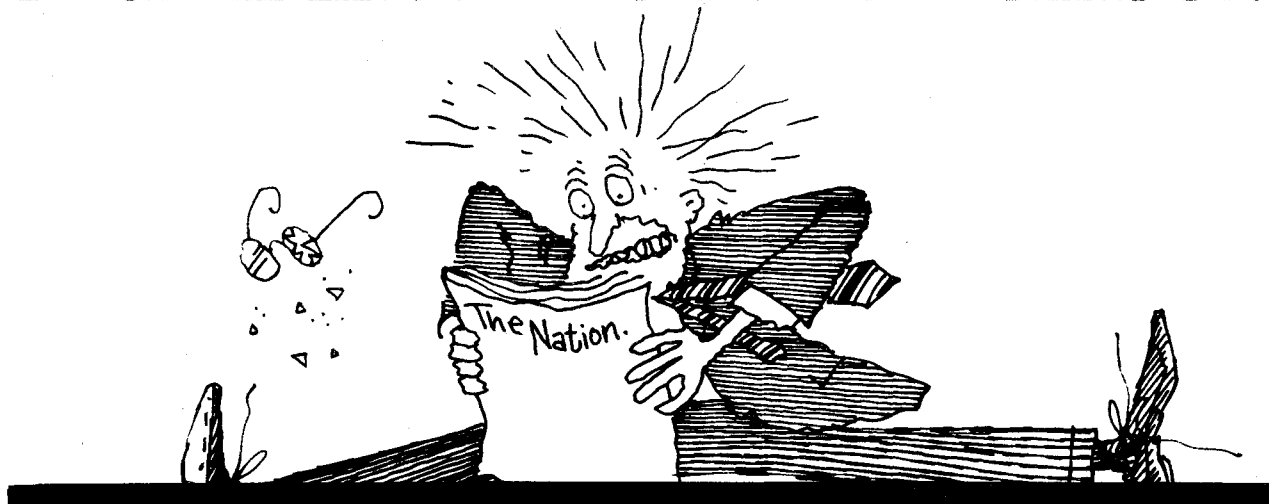
My own investigations, as well as still-secret grand jury testimony and material uncovered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in connection with the Lavelle trial, show the existence of a massive and potentially illegal program by the Reagan Administration to manipulate tens of millions of dollars in E.P.A. and HUD funds to boost Republican candidates in Congressional and Senate elections. The program, as described by a former high-level White House official and corroborated by other evidence, was run by the White House through the Office of Cabinet Affairs, headed by Craig Fuller. In 1985 Fuller was promoted to chief of staff to Vice President George Bush, and he later was one of Bush's top campaign advisers.

A number of other prominent White House aides, including Michael Deaver and Edwin Meese 3d, also played key roles in this program. It is not known how much Reagan knew about it, but the President surely knew how to play the game: He personally ordered the transfer of HUD funds to finance the New Jersey project for the elderly after Fenwick asked him to do so on September 17 while the two were aboard Air Force One on the way to their joint campaign appearance. The HUD and E.P.A. grants to New Jersey provide a case study of how the two agencies were used during the 1982 election.

On the morning of September 17, a high-level Housing Department official sent the following memorandum to Secretary Samuel Pierce: "I have just taken an urgent phone call [from a White House official] . . . advising the Department that the President, who is en route to New Jersey, has agreed to fund, with Section 8 new construction funds, a 125-unit project in Ewing, New Jersey. He intends to state

Murray Waas is a reporter and longtime contributor to The Nation.

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upon his disembarking from the plane, that he is pleased to announce that HUD has advised it has agreed to provide 125 units . . . for an elderly project to be located at Park Place."

Pierce simply initialed the memo after he read it, and scrawled "Noted," indicating that it was routine for the White House, and not his own agency's administrators, to determine which HUD projects to fund. In a last-minute order, senior officials at the agency transferred funds to New Jersey originally earmarked for a low-income housing project in North Carolina.

Four days earlier, on September 13, Rita Lavelle sent a memo to White House deputy chief of staff Michael Deaver recommending that Reagan take advantage of "an opportunity" provided by the awarding of \$5.2 million in E.P.A. grants to clean up six toxic waste sites in New Jersey. Lavelle even suggested a time and place for the announcement to assure the "maximum media coverage" so as to "support the candidacies of New Jersey candidates including Millicent Fenwick."

On September 20, Lavelle and E.P.A. Administrator Burford met at the White House with presidential counselor Meese, according to the two women's calendars, which were obtained by Federal investigators. Meese, Lavelle and Burford would later insist that they could not recall what they discussed at that meeting, but a September 19 notebook entry by an assistant to E.P.A. general counsel Robert Perry, one of Burford's closest aides and confidants, said, "President Reagan wants to visit" the sites of hazardous waste dumps to announce that the White House was providing grants to clean them up. The memo made clear that the timing of the announcement was to assist the races of Republican Senatorial candidates. On September 23, just as Rita Lavelle had recommended to Michael Deaver ten days earlier, Burford and Governor Kean jointly announced the E.P.A. grants to New Jersey.

Far from being overly zealous individuals who went astray, Rita Lavelle and Deborah Gore Dean, executive assistant to Secretary Pierce, were central actors in the White House campaign effort. The similarities between the two women are striking. Both appeared to be unqualified for the high posts they held. Lavelle's most recent experience had been as a public relations assistant for a chemical company. Dean had managed a bar in Georgetown and occasionally edited a society magazine.

But Lavelle and Dean were not lacking in political connections. Lavelle had worked in low-level jobs for Reagan when he was Governor of California. Dean is the daughter of former Republican gubernatorial candidate Louise Gore and the stepdaughter of Richard Nixon's Attorney General John Mitchell.

As the 1982 Congressional elections approached, the two

departments dispensed their largesse with precision and efficiency. Although the White House had backed cuts of \$9.4 billion from HUD's Section 8 low-income housing program, some of the remaining money was reprogrammed and spent to boost Republican Congressional candidates. Five HUD projects were announced by Representative Margaret Heckler, who was in a tight race against fellow incumbent Barney Frank because of redistricting. In Illinois, HUD scraped together funding for a fifty-unit project that assisted the re-election campaigns of Robert Michel, the House minority leader, and Peoria Mayor Richard Carver. Michel, as the leading Republican in the House, and Carver, as a member of the President's Commission on Housing, played a key role in cutting billions from the Section 8 program, causing tens of thousands to go homeless. But they and the White House had no compunction about exploiting what little money remained to insure their re-election.

At the E.P.A., Lavelle awarded grants and sped up others that would help Republican candidates. Only days before the election Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana announced an E.P.A. cleanup of a waste site near the town of Seymour. An aide to Lavelle would later tell a Federal grand jury that she and Lavelle watched the election returns on television together, and "Ms. Lavelle told me . . . that she felt that she had helped put Lugar over the top."

By contrast, Superfund grants that would have benefited Democratic candidates were withheld. Burford abruptly delayed funding for the cleanup of the acid pits in Stringfellow, California, a twenty-two-acre site with 39 million tons of toxic and carcinogenic substances, after learning that the cleanup had been pushed by Governor Jerry Brown, who was running for the Senate. According to a high-level Reagan Administration official who was interviewed by the F.B.I., Burford told him, "I'll be damned if I am going to let Brown take credit for that."

Some might dismiss the Reagan Administration's political manipulation of public funds to help elect Republicans as politics as usual. But a similar program during the Nixon Administration led to one of the counts on the bill of impeachment drawn up by the House Judiciary Committee. And Congress subsequently enacted legislation making it a felony to manipulate Federal grant money to influence elections.

The Nixon plan, known as the Responsiveness Program, was once described in a memo by deputy director of the Committee to Re-Elect the President Fred Malek, who devised it: "The President's unique asset in the forthcoming campaign is his control over the Executive Branch. The White House must ensure that the President is able to capitalize fully upon this asset . . . we have already initiated programs to derive greater political benefit, from grants, communications and personnel."

One Federal agency Malek wished to exploit was HUD. A HUD official testified to the Senate Watergate Committee that an assistant to Malek at CREEP "asked that [HUD] set aside [funds for] . . . the Responsiveness Program. Under [the] proposal, an individual whom the White House would designate, but who would not be an employee of [HUD] . . . would make the decision as to how those monies were to be

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committed. . . I [said] that in my judgment such a program . . . sounded illegal and certainly improper." Finding the HUD bureaucracy uncooperative, the Administration gave up. Ronald Reagan did not encounter similar resistance a decade later.

Material in F.B.I. files and testimony before the Federal grand jury that indicted Lavelle disclose that her chief contact was Craig Fuller. In addition, two Federal law enforcement officials say that the Reagan Justice Department stopped them from looking into Lavelle's White House ties. A senior Justice Department official, Larry Simms, who was a deputy assistant attorney general at the time, charged in a memo that in his opinion "the EPA investigation . . . has been totally inadequate . . . and that inadequacy was a result of either incompetence or lack of integrity."

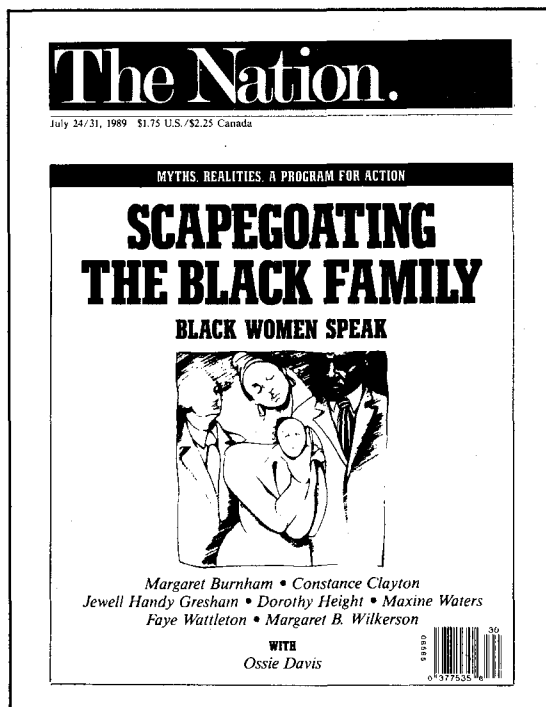
Fuller claims that he had almost no contacts with Lavelle. He told a reporter from U.P.I. during a March 10, 1983, interview, "I honestly don't recall having telephone conversations with [Lavelle]. . . . It's possible in two years, that we talked once or twice." On another occasion, Fuller averred that it was possible she "placed calls to me, but I don't recall ever returning one." But at least eight officials of the E.P.A. and the Reagan Administration have given sworn statements and testimony to the F.B.I., a Federal grand jury, and in executive session to a House Energy and Environment subcommittee that Lavelle and Fuller had at least 150 telephone conversations during the time Lavelle was in charge of the Superfund. Emily Morris, a receptionist for Lavelle, recalled Lavelle placing "around twenty-five" calls to Fuller and that Fuller made "approximately the same amount" of calls to Lavelle. Henrietta Janiszewski, Lavelle's confidential assistant, told the subcommittee that she placed "eight to ten phone calls to Fuller" for Lavelle and that on occasion Fuller called Lavelle. Asked if most of the calls occurred "close to election time," Janiszewski said that this was the case and that "around that time . . . she had to drop everything immediately and get over there."

Finally, additional information linking Fuller to Lavelle comes from a highly unlikely source: Edwin Meese. During his Senate confirmation hearings to be Attorney General in 1984, Meese was queried about allegations that he had been involved in manipulation of the Superfund with Lavelle. Senator Max Baucus asked Meese, "Do you recall how many times you talked to her about a particular waste site?"

"I do not recall talking with her about any particular toxic waste site," Meese answered. "I suspect she may be confusing me with Craig Fuller in that testimony." Meese was not asked to elaborate.

In her first extensive interview with a reporter since her conviction and jail sentence, Lavelle confirmed to me that Fuller was her chief contact in the White House: "Everything I did I checked very closely with Craig Fuller to see if it was all right to do. I did nothing of importance without informing him about it ahead of time." Lavelle said such phone conversations were "informational" in nature, not "directional": "I told him what I was up to; he never gave me orders. But when I did tell him, he never objected."

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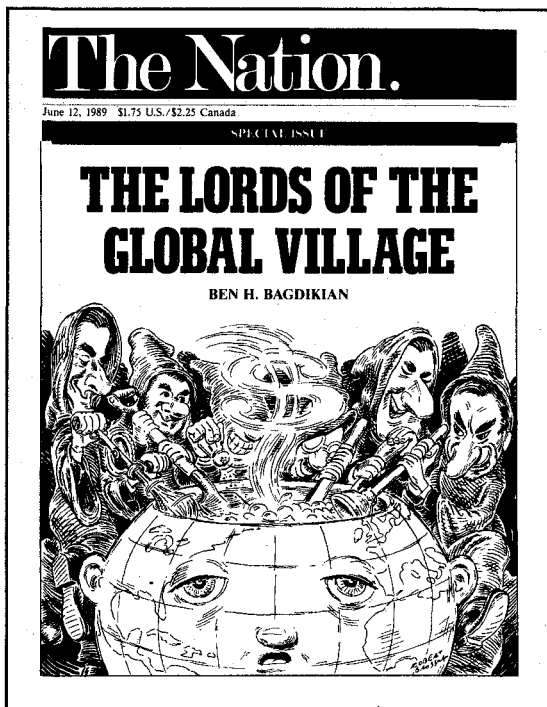
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Fuller did keep abreast of grants for specific toxic waste sites that were manipulated for political purposes. According to Federal law enforcement agents, a senior E.P.A. official, Frank Biros, testified to the grand jury that Lavelle and two of her aides asked him to prepare status reports for Fuller. Both of the reports sent to Fuller concerned grants to clean up hazardous waste sites that were politically manipulated — the Seymour, Indiana, and Stringfellow, California, grants already described.

Although Fuller denies having received such correspondence from Lavelle, a second grand jury witness independently corroborated Biros's account. Janiszewski told the grand jury that Lavelle often gave her an envelope marked "Eyes Only" that was to be sent immediately to Craig Fuller at the White House.

At HUD, Deborah Dean maintained a similarly close connection with the White House. She testified to a Federal grand jury in Biloxi, Mississippi, that the White House contacted her on a "regular basis" on behalf of grant applicants: "It was not unusual to have at least one-fourth of the projects on the list that are funded to have gotten a phone call from the White House regarding them." Asked why the White House would contact her, Dean explained, "I was the executive assistant to the Secretary, the chief of staff, and the White House liaison."

Dean had been called before the grand jury to discuss a HUD grant for a Biloxi hotel project. She testified that she had approved the grant solely because of the intervention of White House officials, and she did not even know that Biloxi is located on the Gulf of Mexico. Associate director of Cabinet affairs Richard Davis, who was Fuller's deputy, was Dean's chief contact with the White House. "It was routine in my job . . . to take anything that came into the White House dealing with HUD and any other agencies and send it to that agency for disposition," Davis recently testified before a House Government Operations subcommittee. But Davis claimed that he never exerted any pressure on Dean to make specific awards.

Dean has refused to testify before Congress, citing her Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination. But in pondering her next steps, she might want to consider the case of her counterpart at the E.P.A., Rita Lavelle. The two women were high-level government officials who played a key role in the Reagan Administration's "responsiveness program." Apparently, they were hired because they would be willing to take orders from superiors at the White House. And both women have taken the fall for higher-ups at the White House. Lavelle kept her silence and went to prison. Dean's fate has yet to be decided, while she contemplates whether to implicate her superiors.

Dean's attorney, Joseph diGenova, a former U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, says that if a reasonable deal comes along, Dean might be willing to tell all. What that may be cannot be predicted with certainty, but diGenova claims that it will "establish beyond doubt that Miss Dean was not an independent operator but rather was acting under direction and with authorization." □

BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Sermon From the Mount

MICAH L. SIFRY

FROM BEIRUT TO JERUSALEM. By Thomas Friedman. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 525 pp. \$22.95.

From *Beirut to Jerusalem*, by Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times*, has coasted to a comfortable position on the best-seller lists since its publication in July, pushed by a rise in public interest in the Middle East as well as by glowing and unquestioning reviews. If you read only one book on the Middle East this year, "this is it," Seymour Hersh exclaims on the book jacket. "Brilliant," chimed Anthony Lewis. The book's success is proof that official thinking and mainstream reporting on the Middle East haven't changed much.

In the rest of the world, there is now a broad consensus on the Arab-Israeli situation: The Palestinians, like the Israelis, have the right to self-determination led by their chosen representatives; the actions of the Israeli occupation forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have long ceased to be justifiable; unilateral moves in the region by the great powers are dangerous and counterproductive. Only in the United States do policy-makers and opinion-shapers think otherwise, and it is impossible to ignore the influence of *The Times's* Jerusalem bureau chief (now chief diplomatic correspondent) on their views.

Friedman wants to have it all ways. In *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, he argues that the United States should pull back from the active diplomacy of past years until the parties show they are "serious enough" about peace. At the same time he praises President Ronald Reagan's decision to bomb Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi's tent in 1986 and the deployment of U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf. To Friedman's credit, he proposes that the United States speak truth to the Israelis about Palestinian rights and even proposes the subtle use of economic and diplomatic measures to pressure Israel. But anyone seeking his view of Palestinian rights will discover "self-determination" on page 504, a "mini-state in parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip—without Jerusalem" on page 421 and the 1982 Reagan plan,

which explicitly ruled out a Palestinian state, endorsed as the Palestinians' "best opportunity . . . since Camp David" on page 171. Throughout the book, Friedman disguises the one-sided nature of U.S. involvement in past and present Arab-Israeli affairs, and he justifies the media's obsession with Israel and lack of sincere concern for the Palestinians by invoking the supposedly unquestionable power of the biblical "super story" of the Jews. It is a sorry performance. For comparison, see *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*, by the previous *Times* bureau chief in Jerusalem, David Shipler. It is far more textured, investigative and compelling.

In a way, we should be thankful that this is not a better-edited book, that no one insisted Friedman think harder or attempt a more comprehensive—and thus less self-revealing—look at the problems of Lebanon and Israel. *From Beirut to Jerusalem* is basically a self-justifying reprise of ten years of Friedman's reporting, and the book illuminates the causes of his many biases. Here, often quoted at great length, are many of the local interpreters Friedman relied on and, indeed, popularized: religious philosopher David Hartman ("my own rabbi"), Bir Zeit University moderate Sari Nusseibeh, West Bank expert Meron Benvenisti, Arabist Fouad Ajami. Zeev Chafets, an American immigrant and onetime spokesman for the Begin government, turns out to be a drinking buddy. Here, I can't resist noting, is Friedman's incongruous admission that Menachem Begin "always reminded me of Bernhard Goetz"—even though Begin resigned more than a year before Goetz's crime. (The book is sprinkled with other such attempts to make the Middle East more accessible to American readers.) More important, here are Friedman's theories about power and politics.

Friedman's first major story for *The Times* when he was based in Beirut was the Hama massacre in Syria. In February 1982, President Hafez Assad's troops killed between 10,000 and 25,000 residents of the city of Hama, the center of a rebellion led by the Muslim Brotherhood. Friedman says he went to Hama to try to understand whether its destruction "was an aberration . . . or whether

it could be traced to some more permanent features in the political landscape." In finding for the latter, he explains that politics in all Middle East countries is based on a combination of "tribe-like" traditions, "primordial identities" and the imperatives of authoritarianism and modernization. These are the classic ingredients familiar to any student of Orientalism. At his most optimistic, Friedman articulates the top-down vision of a generation of development theorists: "Over many generations, the integrative nationalist ideologies and practices of men such as Assad or Saddam [Hussein of Iraq] may win their regimes enough legitimacy and security for them to feel comfortable forging true social contracts with their people." But Friedman, who believes he has witnessed what happens "when the modern veneer of nation-statehood is stripped away," says that in the Middle East "it all still comes down to Hama Rules: Rule or die." Like so many other contemporary analysts, Friedman pays little attention to the impact of uneven economic development and class conflict on the internal dynamic of dominant and repressed groups. Instead, he prefers the know-nothing explanation of primitivism, and he concentrates on personalities.

Witness his treatment of Lebanon's turmoil. Friedman recounts the origins of Lebanon's civil war without a word on the coalition of leftist groups that allied themselves to the Muslim and Druse communities in demanding a fairer distribution of power. The poor and excluded Shiites who rose in rebellion through their identification with the Amal and Hezbollah movements barely figure in Friedman's Beirut, except as the source of a "pool of tribal wrath." In describing the "city with a false bottom," he actually seems to adopt a skewed view of Lebanon as solely populated by the middle and upper classes. The "true Beirutis"—"members of the Christian and Muslim bourgeoisie"—whose city he mourns were not just Friedman's friends and fellow golfers, as he admits, but also the people whose perspective he shared.

Friedman often reported powerfully on the plight of the Palestinians and won his first Pulitzer Prize in part for his chilling reconstruction of the Sabra and Shatila massacres. But in this book, he goes out of his way to express his disdain for the P.L.O. leadership. He taunts

Yasir Arafat for failing to move "from Primetime to Palestine" and sneeringly calls him a "bazaar merchant," "magician," "tightrope-walker," "chameleon" and "Mr. Universe," among other things. As Friedman sees it, the P.L.O. was corrupted by the easy life of exile, "drifting aimlessly in Beirut, spending most of its time fighting other Lebanese Muslim militias." If that was the case, why was it so important for Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon to crush the P.L.O. by invading Lebanon in 1982? Many other observers believe that the invasion was the direct outgrowth of Arafat's compliance with the de facto cease-fire between Israel and the P.L.O. in southern Lebanon in 1981, brokered by the United States and Saudi Arabia. By strictly holding to its terms—despite several provocative Israeli bombing raids—Arafat proved then that he was in control of the various Palestinian militias. In addition, his international legitimacy was on the rise, making him more of a threat to the Israeli right-wingers. Hence the invasion. Friedman makes no mention of this interpretation.

Even more troubling is Friedman's handling of the dynamic of occupation and rebellion that shapes Palestinian life in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. If you had read his reporting from Jerusalem for *The Times* from 1984 to 1987, you'd know a lot about infighting in Israeli party politics; the maneuvers of Shimon Peres, King Hussein and Yitzhak Shamir during the on-again, off-again peace process; the "Who is a Jew" debate; and the systematic cover-up of the killing of two Palestinian terrorists after they were taken alive from a bus they had hijacked. But you would not have known, for the most part, that under Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin repressive measures like administrative detention and summary house demolitions were revived. You

would not have known that unprovoked incidents of army harassment and brutality against Palestinian residents were increasing. You would not have known that a "young, militant, powerful and more radical" new leadership was emerging in the West Bank. (Those were Daoud Kuttab's words in a prescient story in *Al-Fajr*, dated August 1986.) You would not have known that the *intifada* was coming.

Instead, you would probably have been convinced that the force of demographics was inexorably moving Israelis and Palestinians toward one binational society, based on unequal rights, an argument Friedman repeats in his book. This was the view of Palestinian moderates like Sari Nusseibeh and *Al-Fajr* editor Hanna Siniora and Israeli observers like Meron Benvenisti. They believed that the occupation had become irreversible and that therefore Palestinians had to struggle for equality in Israel in order eventually to achieve their national rights. "At some point . . . we are going to wake up one morning and find ourselves in bed with the Israeli system," Friedman quoted Nusseibeh in *The New York Times* of August 4, 1987, "and when we do, we are going to demand a marriage certificate." In that dispatch, Friedman cited Siniora's decision to run for the Jerusalem City Council as proof that this process had begun, and he asserted that "the vast majority of Palestinians quietly accepted" this approach. Recounting Nusseibeh's prediction, Friedman tells us in his book that, of course, "Sari was wrong. . . . [The Palestinians] demanded a divorce." Of his mistake in judgment, we hear nothing.

Ultimately, I think, Friedman believed in Nusseibeh's vision of integration because he had too much faith in the power of the Israeli system of control and too little sense, for obvious reasons, of the Palestinians' capacity for resistance. Instead, he saw extensive co-optation as the rule, not the exception. Hence his overly psychological interpretation of the *intifada* itself as "a form of penitence" and "the Palestinians' way of demonstrating to the Israelis and themselves . . . that they were a nation." As proof, Friedman wrongly claims that the leaders of the uprising "never issued any demands." In January 1988, when I was in Israel, the Israeli press had already published the uprising leadership's list, which included the halting of deportations, administrative detention and torture; the removal of troops from popu-

lated areas; and the holding of free elections. It was months before I saw mention of these concerns in *The Times*.

Compared with his superficial observations on the nature of Arab politics, Friedman's rendering of Israel's secular-religious conflict and the fraying relationship between American Jews and Israel is quite strong. But just as he ignores the role of the left in Lebanon, he slights the Israeli peace movement and its American Jewish counterpart. Four main visions compete "for Israel's Jewish soul" in Friedman's view: the "rock 'n' roll Zionism" of "Jews who just wanna have fun" like Zeev Chafets; the religious nationalism of the Jewish settlers' movement; the non-Zionist religious extremism of the yeshivas; and the modern, open orthodoxy of Rabbi David Hartman. Of the many parties and movements of the secular left, Friedman merely quotes Hartman's view that these are "insignificant voices." This is not to say that Friedman is oblivious to the problems of the left in Israel: He correctly blames the Labor Party for much of the left's decline, he notes the central role of dissent among reserve soldiers in deterring the right wing, and—in my favorite section of the book—he movingly describes the problems of an Interns for Peace volunteer in bridging the gap between Arab and Jewish communities. But the action, for him, is elsewhere.

"From Beirut to Jerusalem to Washington" is the title of Friedman's last chapter, though in a way this *Timesman* was always mentally in Washington, or functioning as an outpost of imperial America. See, for example, how casually he informs us that he has been invited to speak to Israeli army officers about how Americans perceive Israel. Friedman obviously now has Secretary of State James Baker's ear. In his concluding chapter, he urges Americans to "think about Arabs and Israelis the same way an obstetrician would think about a couple . . . claiming that they had been trying to get pregnant for forty years but just couldn't"—with a healthy dose of skeptical disengagement. "We cannot create peace settlements for them; there is no artificial insemination in diplomacy." Writing in *The Times* just three weeks ago, Friedman reported Baker's reasons for not making a more intensive effort to break the current deadlock over Egypt's proposal for Palestinian-Israeli talks. Said Baker, using Friedman's imagery, "In order to make progress in the Middle East you have to be part ob-

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stetrician. Nothing is going to happen until the baby is ready to be born." Only if you ignore \$3 billion in aid a year can you imagine the United States to be just a sympathetic outsider. Friedman's strategies may still sell in Washington, where he is now a rising star on the talk

show circuit. He may be headed for a stint in government, à la Richard Burt or Bernard Kalb. *From Beirut to Jerusalem* can be read as a massive job application. But outside the capital, the balance of forces is changing, and Friedman and Washington may yet have to listen. □

against liberalism, an epithet that helped cement the strange relationship between the neoconservatives and the New Right.

By the late 1970s conservative intellectuals were defining and excoriating the so-called New Class—middle-class professionals working in the media, in universities, in think tanks, in the upper echelons of government bureaucracies. The New Class, in the eyes of its detractors, was liberal and elitist. Although the New Right distrusted the neoconservatives, suspecting, correctly, that they were themselves thinly disguised members of the New Class, it didn't hesitate to crib neoconservative theories. But it added a twist. While the neoconservatives had described the New Class as power hungry, the New Right portrayed it as immoral and hedonistic, too. The problem, again, was permissiveness. With the New Class playing the role of enemy, the ultimate miracle took place in 1988: a millionaire Republican, straight from *Skull and Bones*, winning the Presidency by portraying his middle-class rival as an elitist.

How did it happen? Again, Ehrenreich points to the middle class's fear of falling. Middle-class liberals failed to respond to right-wing attacks because these attacks struck chords of middle-class self-doubt. The charge of permissiveness was inaccurate, but it "rang true because it touched on that perennial fear within the professional middle class of growing soft, of failing to strive, of falling into the snares of affluence."

Ehrenreich admits that her overall argument is "rashly speculative." That, in itself, need not be a problem. But speculation calls for more qualification, more caution than she usually displays.

Ehrenreich's definition of the professional middle class covers "all those people whose economic status is based on education, rather than on the ownership of capital or property." Included, among others, are "schoolteachers, anchorpersons, engineers, professors, government bureaucrats, corporate executives (at least up through the middle levels of management), scientists, advertising people, therapists, financial managers," and Ehrenreich herself. Wow. This is a very diverse bunch, particularly when it comes to Ehrenreich's principal concern: attitudes toward consumption. It is unlikely that people whose tastes run from Beethoven to Bon Jovi, Fiorucci's to Filene's basement, Windows on the World to Wendy's, are all going to have more

A Touch of Class

JOSHUA HENKIN

FEAR OF FALLING: The Inner Life of the Middle Class. By Barbara Ehrenreich. Pantheon. 263 pp. \$18.95.

Most books that make sweeping assertions about American culture, Barbara Ehrenreich argues, are really only about the middle class. When authors tell us that "Americans" are becoming "more self-involved, materialistic, spineless, or whatever," they are really referring to the relatively small "professional . . . middle class . . . from which every other group or class is ultimately [considered] a kind of deviation." In *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class*, Ehrenreich claims to do consciously what others have done unwittingly.

Fear of Falling is an attempt to demythologize the professional middle class, to portray it as it is: one class among several, with its own interests, fears and obsessions. But the book is not simply an exercise in cultural anthropology. The professional middle class, Ehrenreich notes, "plays an overweening role in defining 'America': its moods, political direction, and moral tone." By tracing the attitudes of the middle class from the late 1950s through the late 1980s, Ehrenreich hopes to understand America's move to the right.

According to Ehrenreich, the middle class is preoccupied with the fear of growing soft, of losing discipline, of submitting to "the imperatives of consumption, the tyranny of affluence." This is so because the middle class must rely on hard work and deferred gratification in order to retain its privileged position. The rich can almost always expect to maintain their status for life. The same, unfortunately, is true for the poor. Only the middle class depends, in Margaret Mead's words, "not upon birth

and status, not upon breeding or beauty, but upon effort."

This struggle to maintain discipline is, according to Ehrenreich, particularly difficult under modern capitalism, whose success depends on self-indulgence. Bartered by advertisers, afflicted with consumption overload, the middle class both craves and distrusts affluence—hence its almost schizophrenic relationship with material goods and its enduring fear of falling. In Ehrenreich's opinion, this fear is the principal force guiding middle-class life. It helps explain the way members of the middle class think, the goods they buy, the people they vote for, the relationships they seek out.

But why so profound a fear? And why the last three decades, in particular? Here Ehrenreich turns to the 1960s, which proved to be a watershed in middle-class consciousness. The student protest movement shook middle-class foundations. A radically egalitarian future would have meant that "education and intellect would be valued no more than, say, the skills of a mechanic or the insights of the downtrodden." The university, the bastion of middle-class power, was under attack and the middle class began to see itself not as an amorphous, all-inclusive body but as an elite with interests to protect. More important, most of the student radicals came from the middle class and were supposed to grow up and assume their parents' positions of power. When it turned out that these kids had other things in mind, their parents grew introspective—and self-critical.

The most frequent (and flawed) explanation for student radicalism was that middle-class parents had been too permissive. Childrearing techniques underwent massive scrutiny. "Is It All Dr. Spock's Fault?" read one *New York Times Magazine* headline. Neoconservative journalist Midge Decter said that the younger generation had no "capacity for deferred gratification." Permissiveness led to hedonism, which led to trouble. It also became an all-purpose charge

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or less the same perspective on hedonism. It is hard to believe, in other words, that for all these people the fear of consumption is all-consuming.

Much of what Ehrenreich says has a grain—often many grains—of truth. But she tries to turn her theory into the whole truth, and in so doing she is on shaky ground. Her monolithically psychological approach comes close to reducing conservatism to a neurosis. Tempting but insufficient.

The specifics of Ehrenreich's theory are equally troubling. Does the middle class hold stereotyped conceptions of the poor simply, as Ehrenreich claims, because the poor have "come to represent what the middle class fear[s] most in itself: softening of character, a lack of firm . . . values"? Or might there be other reasons, such as fear of crime or plain ignorance? Has "yuppiehood" fallen into disrepute because "the upwardly mobile middle class began to lose its own fragile sense of identity"? Or might it be simpler: that middle-class people, like others before them, found excessive materialism unfulfilling? Is the fear of falling the only, even the principal, cause of internal conflict between indulgence and self-restraint, between spending and saving, between the present and the future? What about divorce, loss of community, political unrest, the threat of nuclear war? All these shake our sense of stabili-

ty and may send us reeling from cautious preparation for tomorrow to extreme focus on today—and back again.

Moreover, to the extent that a fear of falling does play a role in the inner life of Americans, it is not clear that the middle class has a monopoly on it. The working class and poor, it might be argued, are even better candidates for this fear. Although the precipice on which the middle class stands is higher, the pit into which the lower class falls is deeper. Family and friends can almost always insure that a middle-class person in trouble does not go homeless, does not starve. Not so for a member of the lower class.

Finally, Ehrenreich's understanding of George Bush's campaign success, and her explanation of the right's ability to paint liberals as elitists, is unconvincing. It is true that some liberals, to their detriment, failed to respond to right-wing smears. But the relevant question is how the charge of elitism became credible in the first place.

Ehrenreich seems intent, for the most part, on avoiding this question, perhaps because she realizes that, when the charge comes from Norman Podhoretz and George Bush, the pot is calling the kettle black. But it is not sufficient to argue that the right is more elitist than the left.

In fairness to Ehrenreich, she does, at one point, admit that there is a "grain

of . . . disturbing truth" in the right's attack on the liberal elite: "Middle-class-led reform movements, from the Progressive Era to the War on Poverty, have been marred by an elitist distance from the would-be beneficiaries of reform." But this is a departure from an argument that focuses almost exclusively on the middle class's internalization of the charge of elitism, not on the substance of the charge itself.

The charge's effectiveness comes from the fact that the university, which has long been associated with snobbery and elitism, with lofty theories untested by real-world problems, is also associated with liberalism. To a great extent, this is a consequence of the 1960s. But even today, many universities are liberal strongholds. Conservative intellectuals, despite their prominence, are a relatively strange sight. And although, as Ehrenreich notes, students in general are now as conservative as the rest of the population, in the more elite universities, the universities that produce many of the most prominent members of the professional middle class, the student body remains predominantly liberal. Polls of Ivy League students in 1988, for example, showed disproportionate student support for Dukakis.

The attitude of some middle-class liberals has helped strengthen the charge of elitism, and Ehrenreich's theory about the middle class may help us understand why. Ehrenreich notes that knowledge and expertise are the "capital" of the middle class. Without them, middle-class members would indeed fall. But this argument suggests something deeper. The professional middle class, which is constantly reminded that it lacks the influence of the truly powerful, can console itself by flaunting its "intelligence," its superior knowledge. And in doing so, it reinforces the charge of ivory-tower elitism.

Take, for example, Ehrenreich's response to a Nixon diary entry that lambastes the New Class and praises "middle America" for its guts and character and patriotism. She writes: "There, in ungrammatical outline, was the germ of the New Right's eventual strategy."

Now, Ehrenreich can surely be forgiven for taking a jab at Nixon's syntax. Still, she inadvertently explains his attitude. What Nixon likes about middle Americans is that they don't care about his grammar. The people who do care are, in George Wallace's words, "the over-educated ivory-tower folks with pointed

TAO-CHI

Dressed in his long, white, long-sleeved,
blue-sashed holiday robe,
with a fashionably wispy beard
and some kind of Confucian doodad
on his head (it looks like a lantern),
the poet stands, face slightly tilted
upward, in the little grove.
It is just the first month of spring.
Yellow blossoms have appeared
on some of the branches. Others
are still bare. He is probably watching
the four or five black birds perched
on the central tree. Or perhaps
he is looking across to the left-hand
side of the page where, ending
a quote from Tu Fu, the character
for *human being* is inscribed
in two breathtakingly elegant
brush strokes. The ground is marshy.
A light wind rustles his robe.
Suddenly, with a shock, he realizes
that nothing in this life—nothing—
nothing—is ever lost.

Stephen Mitchell

heads looking down their noses at us." In the public mind (and often in reality), these pointy-heads are liberals.

Despite these problems with Ehrenreich's central argument, there is a good deal to recommend in *Fear of Falling*. The book is elegantly written, and the insight and wit that characterize her journalism are also abundant here. Ehrenreich's chapter on the New Class is particularly good, as she dissects neo-conservative dishonesty and hypocrisy. She is equally incisive when attacking the permissiveness theory, noting that capitalism, the main source of permissiveness, is never a right-wing target. Throughout, she has a keen eye for the contradictions of our culture. Her book, its faults notwithstanding, is worth a careful read. □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Orpheus Descending
Wonderful Town
Dangerous Games
Troilus and Cressida

Plays age, like people and ideas, at a variable rate. Some few seem to grow nobler as they go gray, but most of them lose the glow of their youth and come to seem shabby or cranky or otherwise unattractive as the years go by. After four decades few still possess the power to command any but a polite attention. This sad truth has been underscored by the current dearth of new growth in the New York theater, as producers have ever more systematically mined the 1940s and 1950s for plays that still have some recognition value (often because their film versions have been haunting late-night television for decades). Recent seasons have seen revivals of *All My Sons* (1947), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1941), *Our Town* (1938), *Born Yesterday* (1946) and those two unsinkable showboats *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) and *Death of a Salesman* (1949). It is as though Broadway had become the most cautious of summer theaters, reviving only those plays that might still turn up as winning answers on *Jeopardy* and *Wheel of Fortune*.

By virtue both of his prolific output and his exemplary career (a huge success and shuddering fall), Tennessee Williams is the most interesting still-unre-

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solved case study in the mutability of theatrical fame. Some few plays of his seem guaranteed of immortality, while the very last ones, such as *The Red Devil Battery Sign*, would surely defy even miraculous powers of resuscitation. What never lived can't be revived. There remains a large body of work that is still in dispute: his claim, in a sense, to have his own large *oeuvre* appear, as O'Neill's has, under the aegis of the Library of America. On the evidence of Peter Hall's new production of *Orpheus Descending*, Williams's claim looks more solid than ever.

When it first appeared as *Battle of Angels* in 1940 it flopped in an out-of-town tryout; in its Broadway recension as *Orpheus Descending* in 1957 it had a short run but received reviews that croon over the playwright's demonic powers. It was filmed in 1960 as *The Fugitive Kind* with Brando, Magnani and Woodward, in which form I swallowed its message hook, line and mythic sinker. The message—that provincial life maims sensitive spirits and is particularly dangerous for young men of a poetic temperament—is scarcely original to Williams. Dreiser, Lewis and many others were there before him, but no one has ever served up that message with quite the same horrific conviction—or with the particular subtext that eventually became an open secret: Williams's sensitive, doomed souls were homosexuals.

In Williams's heyday this was still a sin that dared not speak its name, and so the playwright's homosexual subtexts generated plummy grande dame characters, sometimes with a promiscuous past, and darkly brooding young studs with whom the grande dame falls tragically in love. This polarity is at the center of *Streetcar*, *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*, *Sweet Bird of Youth* (recently revived on TV with Elizabeth Taylor as Alexandra del Lago, the most self-aggrandizing of Williams's grande dame self-portraits) and *Orpheus Descending*.

Williams has said that every playwright has an interior repertory company who are cast in all his plays, and that one of Shakespeare's greatneses was that his rep company was so large. It may be Williams's greatness that he could write so many plays for such a small company. And almost all of them are present in *Orpheus*: the grande dame (Lady Torrance), the doomed stud (Val Xavier), the twittering neutered crone who represents the Eternal Artist (Vee Talbott), the patriarchal S.O.B. (in *Or-*

pheus he is Lady's husband; more usually he is the ingénue's father), his henchman, whose job it is to announce that the doomed stud better be out of town by nightfall (Sheriff Talbott), and the ingénue, who is either a nymphomaniac or working at it (Carol Cutrere). Around these central figures Williams arranges choruses of cretinous rednecks. For a writer whose work is so focused on the South, particularly in its oppressive aspects, blacks are curiously absent from Williams's *mise en scène*. In *Orpheus* there is only Uncle Pleasant, a mad conjure man who appears, like the Fate theme in *Carmen*, when the author would have our flesh creep.

I can't say my flesh really crept for this *Orpheus*, but it wasn't for want of professional exertions. Vanessa Redgrave has a lovely love scene and a grandiose death scene, a lot of sly humor, and skates past the purple passages so that she never seems responsible for the gloppy moments, the onus for which falls on the shoulders of Kevin Anderson. His Val smacks more of Dylan than Brando—a surly cuss who is only authentic when he's banging his guitar. Anne Twomey as a drunken nympho is regularly over the top, but when have drunken nymphos ever been discreet? Everything is over the top, including Stephen Edwards's electronic score and the "Tunnel of Terror" lighting design by Paul Pyant and Neil Peter Jampolis. Hall has exerted no more effort to give the ostensibly naturalistic text a gloss of quotidian truth than one would expect to find in the average production of *Il Trovatore*.

It may be that Southern Gothic works, as ghost stories do, by virtue of an unearthly and anesthetizing atmosphere. At the time his plays were being written they surely struck audiences and critics as hyperbolic. "First-nighters sat spell-bound throughout the harrowing dip into Hades," wrote the *Daily Mirror's* reviewer of *Orpheus*, and for the *Post* it was a "searing look at the dark and tormented world of Tennessee Williams." Williams's vision was applauded because it could be dismissed as private and skewed.

Now, I suspect, almost the opposite is true. The myths that Williams dramatized have become so deeply rooted in the national psyche, through having been echoed in the work of lesser writers (and on the nightly news), that he may seem genteel or disingenuous. His subtexts have become the topics for discussion on TV talk shows. State govern-

ments are more likely to fund artists than to persecute them. What his plays require, now, is the *extra* excess that Peter Hall has laid on, so that his myths may again have a whiff of forbidden knowledge, the kind we all want.

Even in the kind of letter-perfect revival represented by *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, I doubt that *Wonderful Town* could keep from showing its years, but in the Equity Library Theater production directed by Adrienne Weiss, the 1953 Bernstein/Comden and Green musical seems to turn to dust before our eyes, like a vampire exposed to sunlight. *Wonderful Town* derives from the 1940 hit play (and later TV sitcom) *My Sister Eileen*, which mythologizes the Greenwich Village of the mid-1930s as a bohemian theme park of harmless lovable stereotypes. Into this never-never land come Ruth and Eileen, exiles from Ohio, one clever, the other pretty, whose every wisecrack and song is calculated to fill a contemporary feminist with fear and loathing. Ruth sings "100 Easy Ways to Lose a Man," a lengthy version of Dorothy Parker's "Men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses." Eileen sings about a form of scheming called Love.

As though to wriggle loose from the coils of the antediluvian book, director Weiss has unwisely cast and costumed the subsidiary roles in current stereotypes of our own wonderful town: there's a shopping bag lady, punks, a lady cop, even an elderly teen in a Batman T-shirt. When the lot of them march about the Equity Theater's tiny stage singing "Life is gay, life is sweet/Interesting people on Christopher Street," it is like watching the Goodyear blimp sail past the pyramids, the disparity between then and now is so vast. In a way that surely wasn't intended, I found the effect bracing. If the overt horrors of Gotham of 1989 are the price that must be paid for escaping the shams and genteel witlessness of 1953's *Wonderful Town*, it doesn't seem too steep.

Dangerous Games at the Nederlander was conceived, choreographed and directed by Graciela Daniele, and she has a lot to answer for in all three categories. The premise of the evening is promising: two full-length story ballets using the tango as a unifying choreographic principle. *Tango*, the first of the two pieces, has an unhappy history, as it is in effect an expurgated version of Daniele's earlier success *Tango Apasion-*

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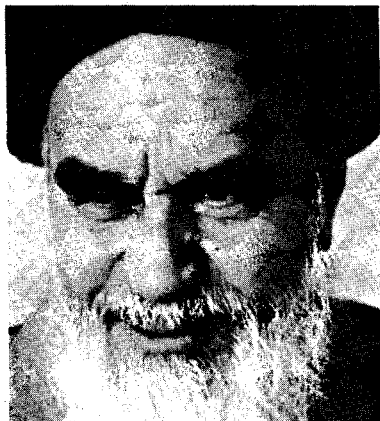
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ado, which was based on a Borges story about two brothers who preserve their own very close relationship by murdering the whore they have both fallen in love with. The author's widow has withdrawn the right to adapt the Borges tale, and so now the ballet ends with the two brothers simply exiting the whorehouse and leaving the third element of the triangle smoking a cigarette and waiting for new customers. Which is a different and less satisfying (at least in a dramatic sense) tale. Borges didn't invent that particular solution to the problem posed by the eternal triangle; much earlier Dumas *fi* had come up with the same formulation, *Tuez la femme*. Daniele should have considered the idea public domain material and not eviscerated her own ballet (though I'm sure her decision reflects more professional legal wisdom than mine).

Even more, she should have resisted the temptation to broaden the appeal of her choreography by adding superfluous songs and short bursts of dialogue that register as shouted stage directions for the benefit of that part of the audience that doesn't understand the conventions of dumb show. Without the added vocal line, Astor Piazzolla's tangos would seem only low octane musical fuel to power the dancing, but add William Finn's lyrics and have them sung by a cast not notable for vocal talent, and the effect is truly cringe-making.

Daniele's second ballet, *Orfeo*, is more ambitious and correspondingly more embarrassing. It is a retelling of the Orpheus legend in the Argentina of the *desaparecidos* (to whom, in the program, it is dedicated). Orpheus, a virtuous folk dancer, descends to the torture chambers of Pluton to rescue his beloved Dicha. Pluton is played by Ken Ard, the one black in the show (a questionable use of color-blind casting), who sings the show's big song, a justification of torture sung while the principal female dancer is being whipped in slow-motion pantomime. I'm sure there was nothing anywhere along the length of 42nd Street, one block away, that was half so lip-smackingly, hypocritically lubricious. I can't believe that Daniele didn't know what taste she was pandering to. As the whores in *Tango* intone as they watch the men fight, "If there was blood we might scream, but we'd find it ero-o-o-tic!"

To give credit where it's due, the fight choreography (as opposed to S&M simulations) was first rate, especially that in *Tango* by B.H. Barry, and most of the

dancers handled their tasks professionally. Though, even in this I have to take exception to Tina Paul's account of the role of "Cristina, The New Whore" in *Tango*. Paul is a dancer of unusually ample proportions and not very well suited to the requirements of apache dancing. The triangular story-line almost seemed a necessity of casting: With Paul it takes three to tango.

Finally, some brief words of praise for a production that will already be over when this review appears, The Riverside Shakespeare Company's *Troilus and Cressida*. On the smallest of stages, with two benches and some drapery for a set, Gregory Linus Weiss has elicited consistently intelligent performances from a large cast in one of Shakespeare's more difficult plays. If the Shakespeare Marathon at the Public Theater proves better able to clear the hurdles that *Troilus* presents, I'll be surprised.

William Beckwith, as Ulysses, delivered the play's most knotted syntax and labored conceits with lucid wit, and in all the character parts—Daniel Sontag as the doltish Ajax, David Goodman as the scrofulous Thersites, Frank O'Donnell as the doddering but still blustery Nestor, and (especially and crucially) Bill Farley as a fluttering Pandarus—the cast sufficed or excelled. Acting honors, though, must go to the juvenile leads, David Cole Wheeler and Lisa Nicholas. There can be few roles more thankless than the title roles in this play of young love blighted by political reality. It's like watching a nontragic *Romeo and Juliet* in which Juliet is made to marry Paris while Romeo looks on and which ends with the nurse's muttered curses. Wheeler and Nicholas managed to evoke the coltish beauties of spring even in these adverse circumstances.

The real subject—or at least the real interest—of the play is not its lovers but men in groups. In no other work does Shakespeare treat so at length and explicitly homosexuality, a theme that surely had to be of interest to him. In its savvy rendering of this and related themes (male bonding and peacockery) Weiss's *Troilus and Cressida* takes advantage of the wealth of the past two decades' new signifiers associated with machismo in both its straight and gay manifestations. Jeffrey Edward Peters is an Achilles who could only have existed after the Village People, and one could imagine David Goodman's Thersites storming the Stonewall without changing an item

of his costume or basic attitude. Steven F. Graver was the costume designer, and with (I imagine) less than 1 percent of the budget Patricia Zipprodt had to work with for *Dangerous Games*, he created a parade of imaginary fashion statements many times more memorable.

The pity is that so few people were on hand to see it. On the Sunday I attended, the cast outnumbered the audience by a good margin. New York City-area readers making plans for mid-November might consider giving Riverside's next major production a go: Austin Pendleton in *Richard III*. For only \$8, the Riverside Shakespeare Company may be the city's best theater bargain. Phone them at (212) 877-6810. □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Mario Merz

Some expression less passive and more fierce than the customary "shown" or "displayed" or "exhibited" must characterize the relationship between the works of Mario Merz and the Guggenheim Museum, which the artist occupies in its entirety until November 26. Merz has seized the ordinarily unaccommodating galleries, *occupied* them therefore in a sense more possessive and dominating than we are used to: He occupies them as students occupy a building or an army occupies high ground, defining the shape of the battle. It is as if he had transformed the museum over into part of its own contents, in an act of stunning appropriation. One of Merz's signature forms, for instance, is that of the igloo, a hollow hemispheric form connoting shelter. On the very floor of the museum he has constructed an igloo within an igloo, while igloos of various descriptions crowd the ramps. Merz thus makes the circular domed space of the building feel an igloo in its own right, housing the igloos within it and hence participating in the spirit of the show rather than standing aloof outside it as mere space. Or again, Merz uses as one of his signature motifs a spiral form that appears and reappears so variously throughout the show that the very curlicue space of the Guggenheim's core, though a helix and not a true spiral, seems to have become assimilated to the visual language of its conqueror.

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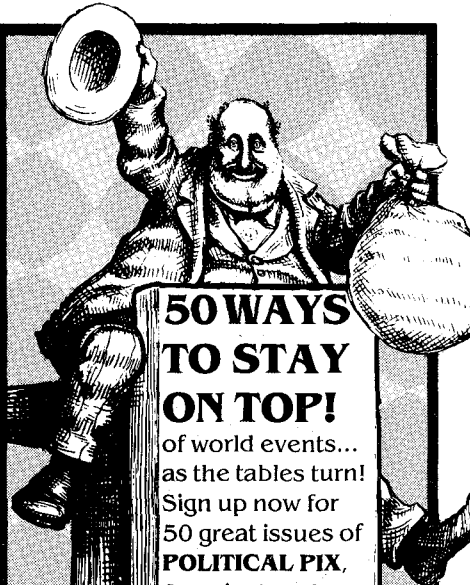
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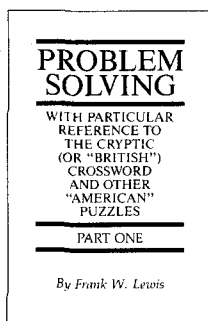
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The Guggenheim is a paradigm of the autocratic architectural will—chilly, self-celebratory, indifferent to the wants and needs of its users. "While I have no doubt that your building will be a great monument to yourself," the Countess Hilla Rebay wrote to Frank Lloyd Wright at one stage of the building, "I cannot visualize how much (or how little) it will do for the paintings." But "for" was the wrong preposition: The question ought to have been what the building would do *to* the paintings. The answer is that it digests them in its intestinal coils, reducing them to patches and swatches. So there is something exhilarating in seeing the old Cyclops bested and nearly domesticated by *arte povera* ("poor art"). Bravo Mario!

Arte povera is a term introduced by Germano Celant, organizer of this exhibition and recently designated curator of contemporary art at the Guggenheim. Its chief referent is the material content of the art in question, consisting of substances regarded as "worthless" for purposes of art, like dirt, or nondescript waste materials too firmly marginalized by critical sensibilities to become transformed into means for the expressive ends of high art: broken glass, old newspapers, burlap, scraps of industrial plywood, fragments of concrete, hunks and chunks of this and that. Coming from the underclass of the bashed and broken—the despised and rejected discards of things once whole and usable—the matter in question was felt to make a statement against artworks as luxurious, collectible, commodified accoutrements of the high life to accompany fast cars and beach houses, snappy suits from Milanese tailors, shiny and designy chairs of chrome and polished leather. In thus siding with the subproletarian substances cast off by the industrial world, the makers of *arte povera* were held to have taken a posture that resembled one taken by minimalism here at home. Minimalism's effort was in part to leach from works of art all internal meaning, beauty or significant form—often by using much the same order of matter favored in *arte povera*—in order to emphasize the social character of art and the participatory character of aesthetic experience. The American minimalists thus displayed wall-like units of masonite or plywood, or fashioned boxes through desultory carpentry painted over in the blandest, most neutral of colors. Needless to say, the Italians went a good bit further, much as the Red Bri-

gades crossed lines that had been respected by the Weather Underground. In truth, the characteristic exemplar of *arte povera* is visually exciting and bewitchingly tasteful, as if inspired chefs were to make marvelous dishes only by opening cans: Mario Merz's dapper igloos made of tiny pillows of putty-colored stuff, laced with suave blue neon, have all the high style of Italian design. There is, moreover, the inevitable paradox that items of *arte povera* quickly have become sought after by stylish collectors and curators à la mode, and fetch a pretty lira in the art exchanges. So the movement began as a kind of anti-art revolution, the equivalent of having everyone dress down in Chairman Mao caps and jackets, but ended up by making things that impress us as dazzling redemptions of what one would have supposed were aesthetically intractable substances. In this, Merz stands close to the artist one feels he was destined through his name to resemble, Kurt Schwitters, whose *Merz-bilder* and *Merz-bauen* collages and assemblages aestheticize materials so utterly outcast as to verge on untouchability.

Part of the *arte povera* concept is sustained throughout the Guggenheim's installation, and in particular by the igloos. There is an odd feeling that the space had been occupied by nomads who displayed the most extraordinary ingenuity in setting up their camp, compiling shelters out of materials they might have found in dumpsters, turning to use what the rest of us would have stigmatized as trash if we so much as noticed it. And then they moved on, discarding their shelters the way snakes leave their skins behind. The Eskimo igloo is a marvelous example of how an adverse environment can be rearranged to protect human beings who would otherwise be terribly exposed to it. It vividly illustrates the dialectical cunning of which Hegel makes so much, wherein natural forces act to achieve their opposites. It is by the keystone pressing down that the arch stands up, using gravity to overcome gravity. It is by baking bricks that fire contributes to the existence of structures proofed against flame, or the sun causes trees to grow that shelter us from the sun. The bitter cold preserves the ice that protects the Eskimo from the bitter cold. The connotations of the igloo are benign; the igloo symbolizes wrestling out of nature the warmth and shelter that human beings require, in our fragility, to endure in nature. Merz uses shards of

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broken glass for some of his igloos, and the transformation effected by clamping them to bent tubing is at once political and aesthetic. It is political because what had been rendered useless for building becomes the very stuff of building. It is aesthetic because the eyesore of shattered glass becomes a glistening dome. His igloos are tributes to human resourcefulness because of their unlikeliness. They resemble in this the improbable and ephemeral shelters one sees cobbled out of cardboard and plastic—and anything else at hand—by the homeless at the edges of streets in our cities. They imply, as do the igloos of the Eskimos, a way of coping at the edge of extremity. And in some uncanny way, Merz's igloos project a message of survival and hope.

It is this aura of optimism, as much as the triumph over the tyranny of the Guggenheim's space, that accounts for the rush of good feeling the Merz show arouses. The igloos have skins of slabs of slate, of daubed canvas, of bean bags and of wattles, bundled twigs, lumps of clay, even, in one case, of flat loaves of Armenian bread. The imagined shelter-makers live with a philosophy that the world consists of useful bits. Everything can be appropriated to human need: leaves, sticks, stones and shells form an exploitable complex of things ready to hand. It is a world in which we can get by, however reduced the materials. Merz's message is, without preachiness, one of solace and uplift.

There is more. The world is not merely composed of things that may be shaped and assembled into structures: It brings forth things that nourish. Interspersed among the igloos are what feel like offerings placed on altars—fruits and vegetables, piled and placed in artful arrays on spiral tables. The table itself is a potent symbol of sitting down together and participating in the inevitable ritualization of the meal, but a spiral table carries a further metaphorical meaning in that the shape is associated with growth in Merz's symbolic vocabulary, and hence such a table expresses that what is placed upon it is the product of growth. In the large alcove on the lowest coil of the Guggenheim ramp—the one that can be viewed from the coil above—Merz has placed a particularly large spiral table with green apples arranged in an arithmetic progression that is repeated throughout his work, namely that of the Fibonacci series: one apple, then one apple again, then two apples, then three, then five, then eight apples.

(In the Fibonacci series, each number is the sum of its two predecessors.) Fibonacci numbers are everywhere in the atmosphere Merz has created, painted and drawn or formed out of shaped neon tubing. Wherever they appear in the art world at large, they advertise the message: Mario Merz was here. And they are the hit of the show: I saw two guards explaining to visitors how the series runs. And the visitors walked away smiling, having mastered one arcane symbol of modern art.

The Fibonacci series was discovered in the thirteenth century by the mathematician monk Leonardo of Pisa, who published it in a book important for a number of things, including the popularization of the now-familiar Hindu-Arabic numerals. It offers an algorithm for solving perplexing problems such as how many pairs of rabbits will exist at the end of a year, stemming from an original pair, if each pair produces a pair a month and every pair becomes productive after the second month (and there are no deaths). The Fibonacci numbers are related to the logarithmic spiral that my friend the mathematician Ralph Raimi says, with tongue spiraling into cheek, is "the one used by God in building the spiral nautilus and sunflower seeds." The logarithmic spiral is found exemplified from the snail shell to the tails of lizards and the trunks of elephants; you can form a good sense for its proportional increments if you think of it as a coiled cone. So the standing cone can be thought of as a kind of linear or unwound logarithmic spiral, and it is thus not surprising that the cone, like the snail's spiral or the lizard (bearing Fibonacci numbers on its back), figures largely in Merz's iconography. It connotes growth, for him, and he uses it as a symbol of hope. Raimi told me an interesting fact about the series, which I am sure Merz would have used had he known it: The ratios between the numbers and their predecessors in the series converge to the ratio "one plus the square root of five, divided by two," which is the famous Golden Section of antiquity, admired as expressing the ideal aesthetic proportion for the rectangle. The internal connection between the mathematical, the organic and the aesthetic is irresistible to a certain kind of mind.

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Thompson's *On Growth and Form*, which discusses the spiral in some depth. It has been suggested to me that Frank Lloyd Wright was inspired by the book, but since Thompson is careful to distinguish the helix from the spiral, and since it is the former that Wright uses, I am not convinced by the hypothesis. What is true is that Wright was obsessed by spiral-like structures: He designed an observatory in which a spiral makes some marginal metaphorical sense; a shoestore and an automobile showroom, where it may have had some functional sense; and then the museum, where it makes sense neither functionally nor metaphorically (though it might have made both had it housed Japanese scrolls, where the coiling ramp might suggest the act of unrolling). The outside of the Guggenheim, which resembles a sort of upside-down spiral, like a squat cyclone, makes no architectural sense at all. In any case, there are enough felt congruities between helixes and spirals for Merz's tables and the museum that houses them to yield the rather rare sense of harmony possible with Wright's stubborn space. And one feels, in effect, some sort of harmony, cosmic and moral, in a show that fuses so much together into a symbolic whole: humans as dwellers and growers, igloos and tables as primordial forms of art, vegetables and fruits and even animals whose shapes or markings conform to the Fibonacci series, and then the Fibonacci numbers themselves. Then finally there are various slogans, political and sentimental, that Merz encountered, for example, as graffiti on walls in Paris in the *événements* of 1968, executed here in a stylish neon script, attached to or even penetrating surfaces, with a feeling somewhat like the texts in the panels of comic strips. It is a show almost transradiated by sentiment and warmth, as if kitsch and the avant-garde were not quite so polar and opposed as Clement Greenberg made them out to be in his landmark essay "Avant-Garde and Kitsch."

Merz has difficulty integrating an impertinent motorcycle, to which the artist has attached horns as incongruously as he has attached the motorcycle itself to one of the upper coils of the gallery, where it sticks out like a mechanistic gargoyle above the distant floor. In a superb review of this show the critic Roberta Smith suggested that by placing it where he has, Merz has in effect converted the ribbon of concrete that is the guardrail of the gallery into a sort of

loop-the-loop. I think this too ingenious. You cannot at once have a tabernacle and a joyride, and the harvest feeling of the show, the sense of plenitude and gratitude, the harmonies of humans, numbers, animals and shapes is at odds with a machine a shade too expensive in any case quite to fit *arte povera* criteria. Perhaps it was put there to inhibit the sentimentality the artist sensed as an aesthetic danger. No matter what, it is a bad idea where the Fibonacci numbers are a good idea. They are a good idea even when their symbolism is darkened somewhat by D'Arcy Thompson's observation that "it is in the hard parts of organisms, and not the soft, fleshy, actively growing parts that this spiral is commonly and characteristically found: not in the fresh mobile tissue, whose form is constrained merely by the active forces of the moment; but in things like shell and tusk, and horn and claw, visibly composed of parts successively and permanently laid down. . . . The logarithmic spiral is characteristic, not of the living tissues, but the dead." (I don't quite see how to square this with trunks and tails.)

Still, it is the feeling that counts. The show could not be more seasonally appropriate, and for those who care to co-meditate the thoughts conveyed by Succoth or Thanksgiving in a secular enclave, quite apart from the usual style wars of the moment, this is a wonderful show to experience. □

EXCHANGE.

(Continued From Page 586)

back on productive investment as long as they do not see adequate profits for their efforts, and to move their plants to low-wage, nonunion regions. Public policy needs to challenge these prerogatives before basic improvements can occur in our economic landscape.

Robert Pollin

CORRECTIONS

In Susan Anderson's October 16 article, "Eyes on the Prizes, Not the People," the Mayor of Atlantic City was misidentified. He is James Ustry.

In Jim Sibbison's November 6 article, "Revolving Door at the E.P.A.," the year William Ruckelshaus began his second tenure as Administrator was 1983, not 1973.

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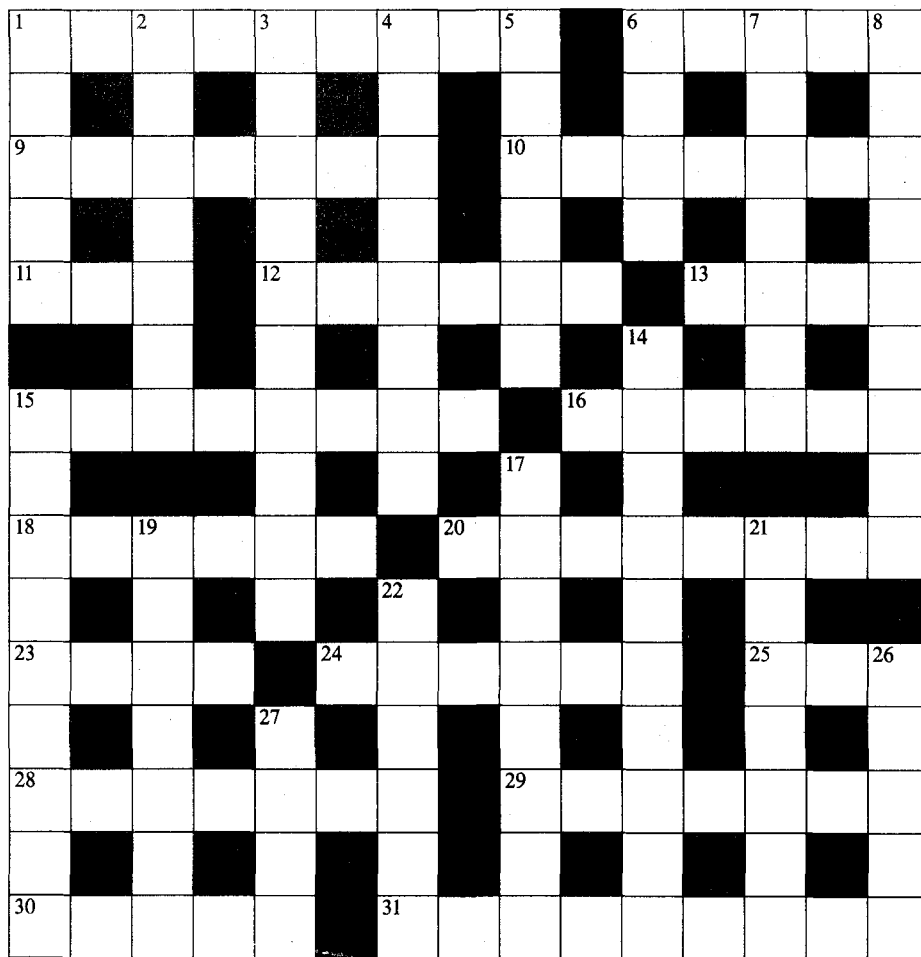
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ACROSS

- 1 and 6 If the truth should be known, you might. (5,4,5)
- 9 25s, perhaps, or work in the theater, of sorts. (7)
- 10 Stiffener obtained from more than one animal. (7)
- 11 One for itself is crude justice. (3)
- 12 See 5 down
- 13 The pervasive quality of Miss Lee in song? (4)
- 15 Not guilty, as the sailor figured out. (8)
- 16 See 30
- 18 Part of the test, or questionnaire, has a twist to it. (6)
- 20 The writing implement is, compared with a weapon. (8)
- 23 This many 29s to make a man, as they used to say. (Each one was given a ring, for a change, when the baby was born.) (4)
- 24 Part of the old barn may differ—how about it! (6)
- 25 and 7 down Manage a place for fair exposition? Mark Twain wouldn't want to! (3,7)
- 28 and 29 You might okay something with yours—as first landlords. (7,7)
- 30 and 16 A couple of shifts in the air of a Porter? (5,3,3)
- 31 The science of versifying. (You, by the sound of it, may be put ahead of it for exercise, in a way.) (9)

DOWN

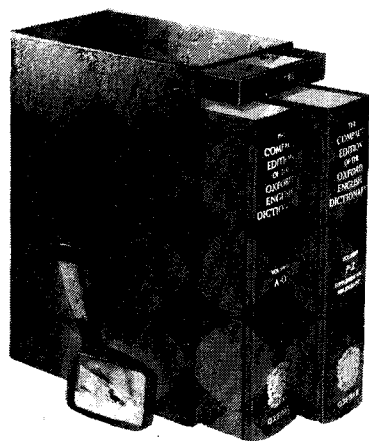
- 1 and 15 Shut down before eleven—changing into what you are expected to pay, at times. (5,9)
- 2 You can't make them without breaking something, as one might allow in some difficulty! (7)
- 3 Some collectors consider it a sticking point, but Tipper might want to. (5,5)
- 4 When in clover, a Wednesday showing has what the poor spectator might be! (8)
- 5 and 12 across They sound like open spaces for such as Peter, but a carpenter would recognize them. (6,6)
- 6 One might use a pedestrian approach to 31, but public transportation is available. (4)
- 7 See 25 across
- 8 A real turkey with one using a crosscut, but evidently an adventurous one! (3,6)
- 14 Where one expects to find at least two hands wide awake! (2,3,5)
- 15 See 1 down
- 17 With such faddism, all you find—in such a melancholy manner! (8)
- 19 25 in the past, with such as Martin Luther being listed as tops! (7)
- 21 One comes from a young nation that is fifty-one around a bent ear. (7)
- 22 Sewer of sorts, contributing to rail wreck. (6)
- 26 The things races are sometimes won by, as the detecting type discovers. (5)
- 27 One surrounded by an explosive color? (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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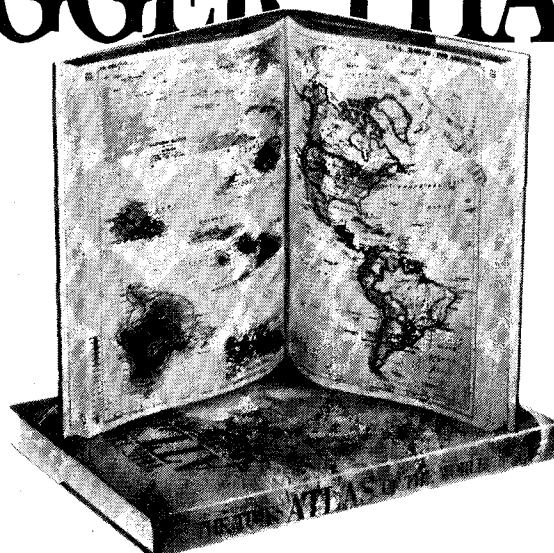
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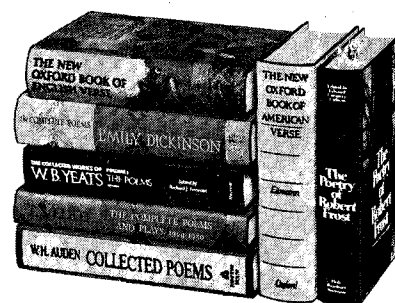
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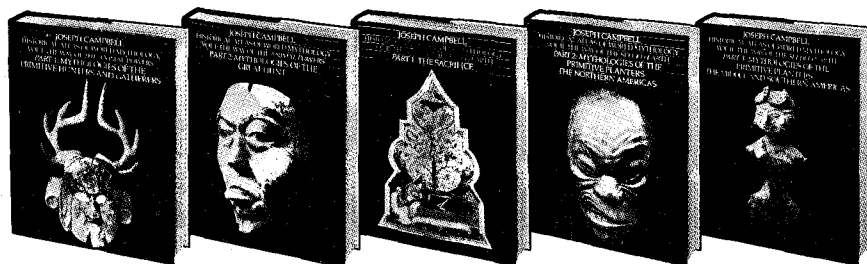
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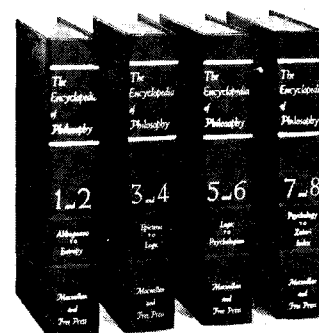
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